

# Childhood Education

**The Challenge  
of Uncertainty**

**November 1952**

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For Those  
Concerned With  
Children 2-12

To Stimulate Thinking  
Rather Than  
Advocate Fixed Practice

1952-53: The Challenge  
of Today's Children

## Next Month—

"Children Differ — So Should Programs" is the stimulating topic for the December issue.

The editorial by Pauline Hilliard calls for "warm, sympathetic, human ways to plan programs that meet the differing needs of children."

You will be happy to find a discussion on what provides a basic continuity for children everywhere when programs vary.

"Our Programs Are Different" provides anecdotal accounts from Florida, Delaware, and Arizona.

The role of parents in curriculum planning is an important contribution to this issue.

The second section — Children and Art — has four articles which present new thinking to the importance of art education.

News and reviews bring information on happenings and materials.

# Childhood Education

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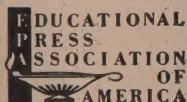
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*Courtesy, Vancouver Public Schools, Canada*

### Responsibility

That child  
whose little hands  
hold a bright tomorrow  
full of hopes and dreams and love  
is yours.

—HARRY O. EISENBERG



# *A Responsibility to Look Forward*

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH AND UNREALISTIC TO DENY THAT WE ARE LIVING in times of great confusion and uncertainty. Powerful forces in operation throughout the world today are causing thoughtful people everywhere to view the future with deep concern and apprehension. To many individuals the problems that confront us appear to be completely overwhelming and quite unsolvable. These individuals reflect attitudes of fear, despair, and defeatism. They would escape the realities of the present by an ignominious retreat into the past.

The teachers of America dare not succumb to the enervating effects of defeatism and despair. They have an unprecedented responsibility to look forward rather than backward. To them the problems and uncertainties of the present must become a challenge for the building of a better tomorrow.

Fortunately, the opportunities and resources for constructive, confident, and courageous teaching in these times are abundant. The children with whom we live and work are confident, freedom-loving individuals. They are unafraid of the future and unencumbered by outmoded habits of thinking and doing. These young people will not find it difficult to accept and fulfill the responsibilities of world citizenship. They live in times when events of world-wide significance daily impinge upon them. The loyalty and devotion of these young people to the great humanitarian ideals of democracy will be easily and readily achieved. They live in times when the very survival of civilization depends upon the translation of democratic ideals and values into direct and positive action. The achievement of universal and lasting peace will mean more than a utopian dream to these young people. They are living in times when the utter futility of war is being continually and dramatically demonstrated.

We have made marked progress in developing the problem-solving method of teaching and learning. Further improvement of this method will contribute greatly to the ability of students to deal with the complex problems that must inevitably confront them.

Throughout the country today there is evidence of renewed public interest in our schools. Although expressed, at times, in negative and destructive ways, it does provide teachers and school administrators with a unique opportunity to interpret the strategic role that education should play in an age of great confusion and uncertainty.

TO THE EXTENT THAT THE TEACHERS OF AMERICA REFUSE TO SUC-  
cumb to a spirit of defeatism and to the extent that they look forward  
rather than backward in these days, we may confidently expect that the  
historian of the future may say of them—"This was their finest hour."

—PAUL J. MISNER, *superintendent of schools, Glencoe, Illinois.*



*"Children's resiliency and power in meeting new situations can be cultivated," says Bernice Baxter, director of education in human relations, Oakland California Public Schools.*

## MEETING

THE CHILD WHO LEARNS THAT HIS FEAR of the dark is unfounded has taken his first step in conquering uncertainty. After dispelling his desire to turn and run from the dark, he finds by concentrating on the problem which confronts him that he can use familiar objects to find his way through the dark. By holding to that in which he has confidence, he learns to explore that of which he is less certain. He finds that darkness need not threaten him.

How symbolic this early experience of facing uncertainty is. It has within it all of the elements which more complex situations may involve: meeting the unknown; moving in a step-by-step fashion over untried paths; locating helpful markers along the way as a means of avoiding possible pitfalls; achieving confidence that comes with the realization that a difficult situation has been met and solved. Psychologists and psychiatrists tell us that knowledge allays fear. The habit of using certainty or knowledge to overcome the fear of uncertainty is a habit to be cultivated.

At this time, when adults are particularly anxious about the future, it is highly desirable that children learn to meet uncertainties with a degree of confidence. Young children are sensitive to worries which beset their parents, teachers, and adult friends. Unless we are aware of the effects of these adult insecurities, children's approach to problems may be colored by anxiety which is unwittingly transferred to them. We need to give children positive guidance in meeting the uncertainties of everyday life as a means of counteracting the fear-producing influences of the environment.

When we are teaching problem solving in arithmetic we try to have children establish the habit of proceeding from the known to the unknown. When the positive facts concerning an arithmetic problem are at hand, the undetermined relationships become more easily recognized. So it is with other problem situations. If what is known can be used, the unknown looms less forbidding.

Children's resiliency and power in meeting new situations can be cultivated and strengthened by regular and consistent practice. The process calls for deliberate and unperturbed seeking for the known, sorting out the unknowns, and facing them without fear or confusion. To grow in this capacity, children need an environment which will give them frequent opportunities to explore their own abilities and with calmness to evaluate their own performance.

### *Stabilizing Conditions*

There is a difference between unguided exploration and planned opportunities for children to become acquainted with themselves. The latter calls for acquaintance of the adult with the child's temperament, his proclivities, and his feelings of security and relatedness to others. Knowing these, the parent or teacher can set the stage for the child's experience without over-challenging his readiness for new and untried ventures.

For the young child, the experience may be using a swing or a slide. For the older child, it may be going on an important errand to a strange place. In school, the taking of a note into a classroom of older children is often an over-



# UNCERTAINTY

coming demand. Whatever the occasion, the child can be helped to face the new experience by the adult's suggesting to him one or two points of procedure.

*The first condition for success in meeting uncertainty is that the child have a degree of initial confidence for the undertaking. To force new experience often defeats the purpose for which it is intended.*

*The quality of the environment which surrounds them is a second condition which affects children's poise in dealing with uncertainty. Adult personalities are always examples and have a continuing effect upon children's attitudes and ways of meeting situations. Adult poise and composure are influences which should not be underestimated. The behavior of parents and teachers is reflected in the behavior of children. Quiet assurance is contagious.*

True learning includes constant evaluation. Willingness to open-mindedly "look at ourselves" can become a characteristic method of both home living and classroom procedure. If inculcated early, children learn to appraise themselves. Self-knowledge is a basic component in coping with whatever arises, be it the need to plunge into a stream to save a drowning companion or facing without flinching a more prosaic and less heroic incident. Only he who knows himself can control himself.

*Experiences, which cause the individual to use his capacities to the full, will help create power and assurance. Worry and anxiety diminish as tested self-assurance increases. Therefore, another condition in learning to meet uncertainty is*

the gradual stepping-up of problems. Systematically arranged situations which call for greater flexibility and sharpened insight afford the practice which is essential to self-knowledge and self-testing.

## *Achieved Certainty*

Children gradually can become certain that their abilities can be trusted. With this confidence, they do not need to fear that they will be unequal to the demands which may come. As man tries his powers and scales mountains, so the child grows to know that he, too, can achieve his ends. With confidence in self he knows how to utilize his capacities. Anxiety does not deplete his strength.

With arithmetic, when all the involved number relations are known, the problem situation is removed. Similarly with other kinds of problematic situations, when all the elements are under control, uncertainty vanishes. The negative aspects of certainty are fear, lack of self-confidence, absence of tested procedures, and inability to concentrate upon the purpose to be achieved. These have no place when an individual has at his command a method of overcoming obstacles.

As children live in an environment which encourages them and in which adults are relaxed and forthright with them, they come to accept difficulties without undue concern. There is a feeling of confident expectancy on the part of both the adults and children. Situations are faced for what they are. The unknowns are sought in advance and a step-by-step procedure is worked out to meet the situation. Once the plan of action is determined there is no doubt about the outcome. Adults and children share in the plans that are worked out for meeting emergencies.

Uncertainty should challenge creativity in children. The unknown can be



zestful and full of adventure when the challenge calls for the concentration of all known resources in order to solve the unknown. Fortunately, many thoughtful parents and teachers today realize that the setting of appropriate goals and plans for reaching these goals are essential to confidence-building and self-dependable behavior in children. They expose children to novel situations which are within the scope of their general experience.

Certainty of one's performance is naturally relative to the task at hand. The ease with which a child will adjust to a new situation will depend upon the experience he takes to it. This is the reason for helping him to take things as they come. The sheltered child has little chance to test himself. Without self-testing, children continue unsure of themselves in spite of the fact that they possess other useful skills and knowledge.

An example of the way in which children vary in their meeting of uncertainty is reflected in the following illustration:

John and Charles were six-year-old boys who impressed the teacher as being particularly mature for their grade. Because they seemed so able, they were asked to assist in the fire drill routines of the classroom. With careful and complete briefing of the boys, the teacher was assured that each boy would perform his task reliably. And each followed through when the fire drill whistle sounded, but with very different effects upon themselves. John was jubilant with his responsibility well performed. Charles was nervous and almost ill. Not until the teacher talked with the boys following the fire drill, did she find that Charles had never been given a task of serious responsibility at home. He had no way of knowing whether he could measure up to the demands of the drill leadership.

The clues to the difference in readiness to meet uncertainty on the part of each of these boys are evident to the teacher.

Rather than penalize the inexperienced boy by depriving him of needed opportunity to gain confidence in himself, the teacher worked out a planned series of experiences for the six-year-old which would give him the achievement and confidence which he lacked.

### *Simplicity and Unity of Purpose*

Freedom from the fears of uncertainty cannot be bestowed but must be achieved. Relaxation and release, like freedom from anxiety, are born of confidence and the feeling of security that accompanies self-knowledge. How, in the uncertain and unpredictable world of today, can we help children and youth to achieve this freedom from anxiety which we know to be the one fortifying strength for today's complexities?

Immature, growing children need short-term goals, with limits of expectancy. Both they and adults have to accept and consistently abide by the goals which have been set. If there are agreed upon priorities for attention and achievement, confused thinking tends to be lessened. Only two or three well-defined areas at a time should be emphasized for concentrated effort. Developed plans, clearly enunciated, will simplify the learning and permit regular evaluation. Learning of this type does two things: (1) provides a satisfying method of achieving one's purposes (2) frees one of anxiety regarding problems to be met.

The most serious obstacle to clear-cut self-appraised achievement is "too many irons in the fire." Adults, in the busy whirl of life, often crowd children's lives with a multiplicity of activities. Classrooms frequently are so bombarded by interruptions from the outside and by calls upon teacher's and children's time that a firm decision must be made to integrate classroom activities so that they will have relatedness for children.



Concepts grow slowly. Meanings are derived from verified experience. Continuity must be planned so that there is sequence and relatedness which become apparent for young learners. Quiet times for reflection are as essential to understanding as are active exploratory periods. Calmness and quietness, too, have their place in learning.

If some of the tensions which come with hours filled with radio, television, and thrillers of book and screen can be reduced, a few of the obstacles to deepened learning may be removed. Children do not learn to know themselves without thoughtful reflection. Even young children need time for uninterrupted living with their own feelings.

Meeting uncertainty requires more than knowledge. It calls for mastery of the fundamental drives to action. Feeling tone is involved. Physical well-being which depends upon rested and refreshed bodies is a factor of immediate importance to emotional and spiritual calmness.

Beauty and balance in the physical surroundings play a part. Restfulness, like calmness and poise, are transmitted by the environment, both material and social. Children who sense propriety and relationships are conditioned often, without adult awareness, to a way of responding under pressure. Unity in direction and purpose are often strengthened by an environment in which relatedness is apparent.

### *Resilient Personalities*

Personalities capable of coping with uncertainty are the product of both the consciously planned elements of education and the influences which operate less obviously. Meeting problem situations with ease and without frustration will help fashion the strong resilient personality qualities that make it possible for the individual to bend to demands without breaking. Well-developed skills and tried techniques of meeting all kinds of sudden situations are the best possible assets for living without anxiety.

As children grow in self-knowledge and personal dependability, they will overcome minor obstacles which present themselves. Practice in overcoming these is part of the process of meeting "head on" occasions which life imposes.

A calm spirit, a relaxed body, and a will to achieve will combine to strengthen and fortify youth for the uncertainties that come without warning. To help each child win his own freedom from besetting fears is, then, a major objective of our times. It is a challenge which we as adults must accept and one to which we must devote our own personal, intelligent effort. Our own composure and confidence are probably our greatest and most effective weapons in helping to free children. We must rise to positive spiritual heights to know that fear is our own making—without substance to those who trust their own resources.

In autumn leaves are red, brown, and gold,  
That's when they are very old,  
And they come tumbling down the trees,  
On their hands and knees.  
Oh! They look so pretty,  
Falling by twos and threes.  
Wonder do they hurt themselves,  
Falling out of the trees by pairs?

—A SIXTH-GRADE CHILD, *Paul Laurence Dunbar School*  
*Newport News, Virginia*



# The World Needs *Everyone*

*How do your practices in grouping, promotion, reporting, and curriculum development help children in a world that needs everyone? Sybil K. Richardson is staff consultant in a Cooperative Project in Human Relations, Los Angeles County Schools.*

**A** DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY INSISTS UPON the rights of the individual and upon his inherent worth and dignity.

The importance of the contribution of each is well illustrated in the family. Although the child is less mature, less able than the adults in the family, he makes a significant contribution to the personal and emotional growth of other family members who care for him.

Who can say that the mayor and the councilmen of a productive community are more or less important than the policemen, park gardeners, or sanitation workers? Without the services of any one of these the community would be a less desirable place in which to live.

The interdependence within the nation is keenly felt when some group suspends services because of union negotiations or when others are unable to perform their services because of drought, floods, or similar catastrophes.

The school reflects and extends the values of the society which supports it.

Sometimes practices become established, through tradition or expediency, which are inconsistent with the school's formally stated objectives. Yet these practices which are reflected in the daily lives of children carry stronger meanings and teach more effectively than verbalized pronouncements.

## *Implications of Grouping*

*This is how it happened.* In one intermediate school, children of each grade

are grouped in three sections, A, B, and C, on the basis of aptitude and reading tests. School honors, offices, and performances are almost entirely enjoyed by the A groups except when provisions are made to include representatives from other sections. Parents with position in the community exert pressure to have their children in the favored groups so that the test criteria are in reality often disregarded. The A groups are similar in family standards and socio-economic backgrounds. At the end of two years in the intermediate school the groups have little communication—the selected students of the A groups are viewed with apathy or resentment as the “wheels”; members of the C groups are dismissed with contempt as “dumb” and “hopeless” by the others.

*But it might have been like this.* Within each core class there is a range of ability as measured by test results. This facilitates the organization of committee and small group work since different materials are needed. The children have frequent opportunities to recognize, however, that while some contribute to reports and problem-solving because of wide reading, others have had pertinent experiences to recount, and still others are skilled in using charts and graphs. The group selects members for offices and representative responsibilities seriously in the light of the known abilities of different children. All children are learning to respect ability without



resentment and with appreciation for its value to the group.

*Special awards often convey a sense of unimportance or defeat to many children.* It often happens as at one small elementary school, that graduation from the eighth grade is a significant milestone in the lives of the young people and their families. For many years a community organization has held an essay contest to select the graduate most representative of American ideals. The winning essay is read at commencement when the presentation of a plaque and gift is made. The teachers report that only a few students really are stimulated by the contest. Most children comply with the assignment halfheartedly. Several teachers have suggested that the concept of American ideals should be made more meaningful to all students.

*It could as easily be planned that all eighth grades participate in discussion of the American heritage.* These individual and group reports could be utilized in the school newspapers and interpreted to the entire school in tableaux, debates, or panel discussions. An attractive printed statement of American ideals given to every student at graduation would better fulfill the organization's goals of stressing citizenship and respect for our country than the selection of a single individual.

### **Promotion Policies**

*This has sometimes happened.* Jimmy has been "held back" in the second grade primarily because of his slowness in reading. He now rarely sees the children who have been his friends from kindergarten. Jimmy often seemed inattentive and slow to learn because of his interest in the other children and his need to attract and win them. Last year his mother and teacher kept hoping that he would "make a spurt" but finally felt retention

was the best solution. This year Jimmy has seemed dejected, discouraged, and apparently is convinced that he cannot learn to read. Before, he was interested in his group and eager to please his teacher. Now, he is listless and apathetic.

*Wouldn't it be better if Jimmy had more time with a familiar group and the same teacher?* If old grade lines were ignored and children were in groups which had some six, seven, and eight-year-olds (sometimes called primary-school grouping) Jimmy might have remained with one teacher for three years. As the older children in the group left each year Jimmy would become accustomed to a partial group change. He would become aware of his own growth as his position changed from being the youngest to being among the older and more experienced. The anxiety of yearly promotions cannot develop Jimmy's insight into his own abilities. This can be built only with consistent guidance and experiences in which Jimmy can see himself against several measures and not always in the same static role.

### **Comparison of Test Scores**

It is the custom in one city to report the test scores from each school to the central office. The results are summarized and the schools ranked by the averages achieved for each grade. Over a period of years the order changes very little and certain schools have come to be known as "good" schools in which it is easy to teach while others are avoided. The ranking of schools does not take into account the home and neighborhood influences which reinforce or interfere with learning. The reports tend to depress the already low morale of teachers in those schools which are consistently ranked as low. While these reports are intended for the professional group, parents and students are aware of them.

*Wouldn't it be better if all results were pooled and summarized in relation to expectancies derived from aptitude scores? The range of achievement for students in the upper and lower twenty percent of expectancy as well as that for the middle sixty percent is of more significance than a rank order. The use of expectancy scores distinguishes between those groups with family and community influences which facilitate academic learning. In reports of separate schools, related information regarding the student population, home resources, and such special problems as bilingualism should be included. Through such reports teachers and citizens are taught that schools within the community are different in needs and resources but these differences cannot be understood as a simple listing of "better than."*

### ***Traditional Report Cards***

*It used to be that the same children consistently received the good or high marks. Because of the halo effect, those children excelling in some subjects were rated as superior in all. For large numbers of children these reports seemed to repeat the evidence that they had failed to measure up. These reports convey misinformation to both kinds of children: some children were led to believe that they were unqualifiedly superior while others felt of little worth.*

*More often now reports are prepared in relation to each child's abilities and limitations. Reports which compared a child with his classmates often placed him in a static relation as fastest reader or next to slowest for many years. If an analysis of each child's own pattern of abilities is made it enables each to experience some progress and to develop insight into self. In many schools reports of growth are made in conferences where both parent and teacher may share*

their knowledge regarding the child without damaging his sense of self-respect. When marks are given they are with reference to specifics and are accompanied by explanations so that the child knows exactly how he can improve.

### ***Curricular Approaches***

Mathematics in the seventh grade in one school is taught in relation to family budgets. Children are taught percentages in relation to expenditures for food, rent, and clothing on a monthly and yearly basis. Actually the parents of most of these children are unskilled or semiskilled workers whose income is irregular. It is not possible for these people to project their income and expenditures with the same exactitude of professional workers who are employed on yearly contracts. A curriculum approach which is unrelated to children's lives fails to use the most dynamic influences in learning. Worse than ineffective, however, such approaches ignore the reality of circumstances while teaching children that their families' ways of working and living are not acceptable.

There are many uncertainties in the immediate future. The picture of the world in which these children will live as adults is far from clear. It is certain, however, that an enduring society needs the best efforts of all its members. Human beings can function at their best only when they feel pride in the abilities which they possess and when they recognize their importance in the total scheme. Many school practices still exist which repeatedly tell children that their abilities are of little worth and that they are unimportant to the group's efforts.

These practices must be modified if children are to be helped to develop their best abilities and to feel the responsibility of contributing to society such abilities as they possess.



# Clearing the Air

*What makes up an emotional atmosphere? What can be done about it? Helene Pelzel, principal, Woodland Elementary School, Wichita, Kansas, relates the ingredients for building mutual liking and trust.*

PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO LIVE, grow, rear families, and build cultures upon the basis of uncertainties, but today's children are more conscious of these uncertainties than previous generations. Through books, magazines, newspapers, radio, and television, they have this troubled era constantly thrust upon them.

An individual who has an inner core of emotional stability and a feeling of competency, at least in some areas, can better meet the uncertainties and fluctuating circumstances of daily living.

Child growth, like plant growth, is largely a response to environmental factors. One of the most important of these factors is the emotional atmosphere of the classroom.

How can the atmosphere of today's classroom contribute in large measure to the building of wholesome and stable personalities? What are the elements in the classroom atmosphere that promote learning?

Probably the most determining factor in any child's environment is the adults with whom he comes in most frequent contact. Of these adults, the teacher often ranks next to the parents. In times of great personal and national unrest the classroom should be an oasis of comparative calm and serenity for both teacher and pupil.

**What are some of the conditions conducive to a healthy emotional atmosphere?**

We learn best:

- when we work in an atmosphere in which we feel comparatively secure and in which the tensions are not beyond our power to accept;
- when we are recognized as a person of worth by our peers and associates;
- when we feel success more often than failure and when a sense of achievement follows the completion of most tasks;
- when there is the thrill of discovery in what we do.

The degree of satisfaction experienced in meeting some of the major human drives determines largely the quality and extent of our learning. The unifying factor in any classroom is that teacher and pupil, alike, are subject to these drives and are consciously or unconsciously striving to satisfy them.

To be able to create a favorable classroom atmosphere, the teacher must work in such an atmosphere. Working conditions for the teacher should not contain elements of grave tensions, stress, uncertainty, and poor human relationships.

**The teacher's time with pupils should** be as free as possible from outside interruptions. It is disconcerting to teacher and disruptive to the class if needless interruptions occur during class sessions. The arrival of a bulletin "to be read immediately" just when the class is in the midst of an interesting, worth-while experience, can shatter many well-laid

plans of the teacher. Often the "high moment" cannot be recaptured. Few bulletins are of such importance that they cannot be read at another time. More careful planning on the part of administrators could avoid many interruptions to the classroom.

*The teacher must feel secure in his right to be an individual.* Teachers are sometimes afraid to try new methods, to experiment with materials, to deviate from traditional practices because administrators may frown upon innovations which they have not initiated.

*In planning for learning situations* the teacher should feel that principal and supervisors have confidence in his ability and judgment. This does not mean unfailing agreement but an honest respect for ideas and opinions even though differing from their own. In an atmosphere of freedom to be himself, the teacher may allow creative abilities to find expression through new approaches to problems. This in turn will give pupils a similar freedom to be creative.

*Time schedules should be flexible* so that pupil interest can be utilized to the fullest in furthering learning. This means no arbitrary program which must be followed regardless of the learning situation. A teacher should not have to apologize if the group is "off schedule" when the principal steps in. It should be assumed that what is taking place is, in the teacher's judgment, more important than what was on the schedule for that time.

*The teacher often faces the uncertainty of job tenure.* Even in these days of teacher scarcity, teachers often have no definite status of employment. Without reasonable security in his job the teacher works under tension and uncertainty about a personal future. Children

are often the victims of these tensions in various ways.

*The teacher's need for adventure, for the thrill of discovery,* can be partially met in the classroom if he accepts the challenge which a group of children offers. What is more thrilling than to introduce children to reading? Or to find some day that shy, timid Ann has blossomed out into a friendly, out-reaching child who plays with her classmates instead of withdrawing from her group?

*Teachers need wholesome recreation* outside of school hours—hobbies, books, friends to visit, travel—to replenish their own stores of vitality and interest. These and other avenues furnish release from tensions arising from an unstable world and give the teacher renewed strength to face the uncertainties of tomorrow.

Adjusting his own problems, how can the teacher help pupils accept and adjust to uncertainties which they face?

A teacher's greatest influence upon children is the impact of personality. The well-adjusted, friendly teacher puts children at ease. He thus frees them from undue anxieties and encourages them to use their abilities more fully.

*The need of every child to feel accepted* is a fundamental one. It is probably the greatest uncertainty which the child faces. Do the parents, the teacher, his peers, accept him as a person? Does he belong somewhere? The threat of rejection is a very serious one to many children. Uncertain as to his standing, he doesn't know what to expect from those about him so he retaliates by rejecting them, by proceeding cautiously, perhaps fearfully, or by retreating into a shell of his own making.

A child's unacceptable behavior is often the measure of his need to be accepted. The child needs the freedom to





*Courtesy, Oklahoma City Public Schools*

**The child needs to be a person with his teacher and his classmates.**

be a person with the teacher and his classmates just as the teacher needs it with adult associates. But often the child has not learned modes of behavior which make him acceptable. Therefore, the teacher's first concern is to make the child feel wanted in the room.

Jane was a handicapped child and entered public school in the fourth grade. After a brief illness at home she refused to return to school. "The children don't like me," was her only reason. When the teacher learned about the situation she suggested letters from the children, telling Jane of the happenings in school during her absence and hoping she would soon return. The day after Jane received the letters she was back in school. "I guess they do like me, after all," she told her mother as she left cheerfully for school.

***The child needs to be recognized as a person of worth.*** He needs recognition and praise for his achievements. Often these achievements are skills "outside the books." It may be his ability to play a musical instrument, his skill on

the baseball team, unusual talent in art or crafts, his rating in Scout work, a knowledge of airplanes or machinery, or skills and abilities in other fields that may gain recognition for him. An alert teacher will learn of these activities and give children an opportunity to share with other children.

Bill was an overgrown sixth grader who was both a reading and a disciplinary problem. His father, an expert airplane mechanic, was invited to come to school to talk to the boys about building planes. Bill beamed with pride as his father held the boys' interest for almost an hour. Vicarious recognition is better than none. When his father's offer to help at school on "Field Day" was accepted, Bill again had the thrill of recognition through his father's contribution to the school program.

***Every child needs to succeed in some area.*** Teachers who are free to plan for a child's success can adjust the curriculum and time schedules so that he does succeed more often than he fails.

It may mean a shorter spelling assign-

ment than the rest of the class, reading in books less difficult than those assigned to his grade level, the bare minimum in arithmetic. Whatever his difficulty or handicap, the child has a right to work at tasks that afford him a reasonable chance for success. A child learns in his own pattern and at his own speed. His learning cannot be forced to fit the course of study or the "time schedule" for his grade. Most of us accept this in theory but depart from it in practice. Often children are promoted or retained in relation to their mastery of arbitrarily set standards.

Since much of the child's intellectual learning takes place in relation to his physical and emotional states, we need to take these into consideration quite as fully as we do his achievements in relation to books. Children should not be denied the thrill of discovery in any field by being told information which they might discover for themselves. Teachers who rely largely upon textbooks as a source of knowledge instead of using the child's desire to discover for himself, will necessarily pull most of the load in teaching. Children naturally "want to find out" and often only a little guidance is needed to open up new fields of interest to them. Knowing that they can learn for themselves gives children an added assurance of their ability and dispels some of the uncertainty with which they approach new tasks.

A teacher's interest—in pupils as individuals and sympathetic understanding of their emotional problem—can do much to help children solve those problems.

*Group discussion of problems in human relations* is a technique which goes deeper into children's feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and frustration. Through a free discussion of problems common to most children this technique

gives them a chance to see their own problems and to help themselves as well as to be helpful to others. Sometimes these problems are of vital concern to particular members of the group.

Such discussions are usually held weekly, as a regular class period. The role of the teacher is only that of "moderator." He does not attempt to "teach" children, but rather to give them opportunity for orderly discussion of questions of interest to them in the realm of human behavior. Stories which bring out fears, frustrations, feelings of hostility, resentment, conflict areas, and deep desires, are all in the realm of human emotions and can be used to stimulate discussion.

The knowledge that others share these unpleasant emotions and these areas of uncertainty and hostility and that other boys and girls have met such situations with varying degrees of success gives confidence to the group members.

*Acceptable forms of release* are provided by the sensitive teacher when tensions build up in the classroom. The arts provide a welcome avenue to practically all children. Time out for a song, a game, opportunity to paint or draw—gives emotional release and clears the air for the group. It is more important that the teacher recognize these weather signals in time to avert the "storms" than it is to conduct the arithmetic class on schedule. Heeding the signs of restlessness and inattention and adjusting the schedule to the emotional needs of the group will enable children to return refreshed, to the business in hand, with renewed interest and thinking power.

The wise teacher will clear the air when storm signals fly in the classroom so that there, at least, the children and he can work and play in an atmosphere of mutual liking and trust.



# Schools Without Children

*Certainly children present many uncertainties in the school day. But are our schools organized for children or for subjects to be taught? Harold J. McNally, professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia, presented these ideas as a portion of an address to the Atlantic City, New Jersey, ACE.*

SOME YEARS AGO, WHILE VISITING A school with a state supervisor, we talked with the principal for a while. He was full of complaints about youngsters tracking mud into the halls, about unreasonable requests, and about interruptions. As we left the building after our visit, the state supervisor remarked, "You know, Mac, I'll bet I know how Walter feels about his job. He feels that he could run a real good school if only there weren't all these kids to complicate matters and mess things up!"

Come to think of it, it *would* be nice, wouldn't it? The furniture would remain attractive and unscarred. Books wouldn't be torn, or lost from the library. Hallways and classrooms would be quiet and orderly. There would be no fights to stop, no irate parents to pacify, no papers to mark, no yard duty, bus duty, or lunchroom duty to interrupt the even tenor of our lives. And there would be no schools and no jobs for you and me.

All of this simply adds emphasis to the fact that the reason for all this public school business is children—living, growing, curious, boisterous, anxious, active, life-loving children.

Much research and many courses in teachers colleges are devoted to topics and problems we teachers and professors deem important. There are courses in administration, supervision, sociology, finance, school buildings, statistics, test-

ing, audio-visual aids, and many others. But no matter how much concerned we are with details of administration, building construction, or financial accounting, the fact remains that *the reason for it all is children.*

In view of this, it seems interesting that so little of our time and effort as teachers is given to learning more about children. When one examines the program of courses customarily taken by a teacher, it is not unusual to find that precious few of them are such that they help a teacher to a better understanding of children.

Of course, no one has gone so far as to forget that children *are* the reason for our schools. Yet many of our activities and practices have tended to forget the dynamic nature of childhood, the insistent needs which children have, the nature of children's interests and fears.

What is the significance of the fact that our schools are *not* without children? That they are, in fact, overflowing with children, and that this is the primary, all-important fact of public schools? Specifically, let us consider the significance of that fact in terms of organization for learning.

## ***Organization for Learning***

Since their inception, American public schools have been organized around subjects to be taught. This approach was

rooted firmly in the conviction that knowledge was power and freedom. We have felt that if only all our children could be taught how to read and write and cipher, plus some facts about America's heritage, most of America's problems could then be solved. Alas, if only it were that simple!

Consequently the school program was organized to teach those subjects deemed important. The curriculum was divided up into subjects, and a certain amount of school time each week was allotted to each subject.

A natural outgrowth was a determination of how much of each subject a child should learn in a year of schooling. Each of these years of subject-learning was then called a grade, and a child was supposed to stay in a grade until he had "learned" the specified amount of subject matter.

*Fitting children to school.* The plan has never worked well; to try to make it work educators have devised numerous ingenious plans. Most obvious is the practice of failing or of-"double-promoting" children, but there are many others. Who has not heard of homogeneous grouping, opportunity rooms, remedial classes, the XYZ plan, and others? Unfortunately, none of these has solved the problem. We have spent too much time patching up the old plan instead of going to the heart of the matter and developing a new plan. This is not to say that the patching efforts were not sincere and commendable. We know that they have mitigated considerably the undesirable effects of the graded subject plan upon children. Nevertheless, more is needed.

*What about the child-centered school?* If we recognize the true nature of children's growth and learning, we may come to the conclusion that an organizing principle other than that of subjects is more likely to help us reach our goal

of educating children for today's world. The first glimmerings of this idea resulted in the unit, or project, method of teaching, followed by the concept of a child-centered school and by the never-quite-clear emphasis of the activity movement.

Today's emerging concept is of a child-centered school, but in clearer outlines than the first bold steps into this orientation. We are passing through a period which, like most transitional periods, is characterized by confusion.

Some of us have become convinced that the only organization for learning with which we have any experience is ineffective and ill-suited to attaining our educational objectives. It is based largely on the belief that schools should be teaching children what they should know as adults. In turning away from this, we have had a brief disappointing experience with centering the school around the child, and engaging in only those activities the children chose to undertake.

Now we are realizing the relative importance of both the child and the culture. The unique problems of children arise particularly because they are growing up in our society, and not in some other society. So what we educate is not the child in a vacuum, with discrete and innate characteristics, but a child living here and now. His needs, his problems, the very direction and quality of his growth are a function of the constant interaction between him and his culture.

*Children face today's problems.* Some educators are proposing that instead of trying to patch and bend and stretch the mold into which we have been trying to fit children for over a century, we scrap the mold and try a new approach. The new approach is a proposal to organize the curriculum in terms of the problems children face in coming to terms



with their environment. Emphasis is placed on solving the problems faced by children at the time they face those problems, not as they may have to be faced at a future date. A premise basic to this approach is that the ability to face problems at some future date is best learned by learning how to solve today's problems.

One group has proposed an interesting framework for a learning program organized around children's problems. The problems arising from "persistent life situations," as they have been labeled, will vary with age and maturity, but are essentially of the same nature.

Undoubtedly there are other organizations of equal or greater validity and promise. What is necessary is determined and creative effort to find a plan for children's learning experiences which is functional, and which helps children to learn better how to live happily and constructively in today's world. The important point to be made is that we start with the child, and develop a plan in terms of his nature, his needs, and his problems, rather than starting with a plan developed in terms of adult-conceived needs, into which the school is then supposed to fit children.

### ***Schools With Children***

There are many implications, then, of the fact that our schools are *not* without children. While a recognition of the true nature of child growth and development may seem to imply drastic modifications, we all know that even if we could make radical changes, such a course would be undesirable for many reasons. The lesson for us all is to start with what we have and make modifications as we see the need for them, and as we learn how to work with methods different from those we now use. Above all, let us recognize that the proper

study of children is children, and if we are to learn better how to help children learn and grow, it is certainly imperative that this be a study for teachers.

As teachers study the nature of children's growth and learning, and as they study the problems, likenesses, differences, needs, and interests of children in their classes, changes in instruction will inevitably occur.

Learning programs will tend more to be organized in terms of local needs—the problems of children growing up in Las Vegas, or Grass Creek, or New York City, or Higginsville. "Subject matter" will be taught and learned functionally as it enriches everyday living and helps solve everyday problems. Teaching methods will recognize the wide variations in children's growth rates, backgrounds, needs, aspirations, talents, and interests.

Teachers will recognize that differences become evident and can be adjusted only in relation to others, and will use more group methods of teaching. Children will plan in groups to carry out group projects. The individual pupil will accept responsibility for carrying out his part of the project.

Finally, evaluation of pupils' growths will be in terms of first things first. Life is successful, happy, and rewarding largely in terms of the quality of our relationships with others. Then evaluation will be concerned specifically with growth in social skills, understandings, and relationships; growth in emotional maturity; as well as growth in academic knowledges and skills. Then, and only then, can we be assured that we have not left outside the school the hopes, the imaginations, the fears, the wonder, the springing interests, the problems that are our children. Then can we be certain that our schools are not schools without children.

## Teachers Who Care

*Uncertainty in the world places children in quandaries! But there is help for these children when teachers care. Eloquent examples of ways it is being done have been gathered by Elizabeth Guilfoile, principal, Hoffman School, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

**T**HE LOUD WAILING FROM JAN LEE in the corner did what it was meant to do. It brought the teacher's attention.

Jan Lee had refused Susan's coaxing, when all the other first graders gathered at the piano to sing "Happy Birthday" to Robert. She had buried her face in her arms when Holly tried to show her one of the new books that Miss Harling had placed on the table before school began.

School meant happiness to Jan Lee. Picture books and play with other children had partly eased the desolation that a child must feel when abandoned by her mother, to the care of unwilling grandparents, after her father's death in Korea.

While children, books, toys and games had helped, it was the warmth and security of her teacher's affection that meant most to her. Her outbursts of weeping came whenever she feared she was not "first" with Miss Harling.

Now the teacher lifted the tense and tiny figure into her lap and undertook to assuage the child's jealous pain. "We sang Happy Birthday when you were six, Jan, remember?"

A muffled "Yes!" came from the wet face buried in the teacher's fresh white blouse ruffles.

"We tied a blue bow on your chair, that day. Remember?"

The sobs were checked for an instant and then broke out afresh.

"But you didn't—you didn't put out new books on my birthday!"

Teacher did not argue that new books had just happened to come on Robert's birthday. She held Jan close and wiped the tear-wet face and talked about the stories in the new books. Finally her account of one of them caught Jan's interest. She took her finger out of her mouth, reluctantly crawled out of her teacher's lap and slowly approached the book table.

There she picked up a new edition of a story often heard in the first grade room, *Winnie-the-Pooh*. The "pop-up" feature of the book delighted her. She dashed off with it to show Susan and soon they were chuckling gaily as they turned the pages.

In Jan Lee's school few children had suffered desertion and complete rejection. But every day Miss Harling and her fellow teachers were called upon to minister to the human needs of children as they were revealed in school behavior.

### *Doris Couldn't Learn Arithmetic*

In the sixth grade of the same school Mrs. Shubert was helping Doris, the new eleven-year-old, to free herself of the idea that, "I can never learn arithmetic. My mother couldn't either."

As the class discussed the dwindling supply of paper towels—they had the responsibility for distribution throughout



the school—Doris suggested, "Divide the packs by seventeen, the number of classrooms, then let each class divide its towels by the number of days left in the school year. That will give them an equal supply for each day."

But she refused in panic when the class, recognizing her swift logic, asked her to work out the divisions on paper. "I can't! I never *could* divide!"

This was true. Moreover, she could not add, subtract, or multiply, with accuracy. In the various schools she had attended while her family moved about rapidly, because of the nature of her father's work, she had practiced in arithmetic classes the same errors she first had made in second and third grades. Now Mrs. Shubert was helping Doris work through the beginning steps. The girl was intelligent and highly adaptable. "If she stays just a few weeks she will be free of her fear of arithmetic," Mrs. Shubert told Miss Anderson, the principal.

### ***Jeffrey Couldn't Read***

Mrs. Shubert was less sure that she could help Jeffrey. It was his problem she had come to talk out with Miss Anderson. "There is one way, and one only, to keep Jeff happy. That is not to mention reading to him, never question or comment when he looks at the pictures in a book or magazine, and supply him with enough of the activities he enjoys to keep his mind off the fact that report card day will come again. I would write an A on that report," she added grimly, "if his parents could be fooled into letting him alone about his school work."

"You've done the usuals?" the principal questioned.

"Yes, I've checked height, weight, vision, hearing—all are perfect. He has had no serious childhood illnesses. Good

food and not too much television. Furthermore, he is liked by his peers, swings a wicked bat on the baseball diamond, and, believe it or not, he likes his teacher!"

"That I can well believe," Miss Anderson smiled.

The records revealed that Jeff had been markedly immature when he entered kindergarten late in the year, but that he was a happy and well-adjusted little boy in kindergarten and early first grade. He had taken part only in those activities that had appealed to the youngest children. In March of the first-grade year Miss Harling had noted in the record, "He looks at books briefly but leaves them for blocks and toys. He is restless and inattentive when invited to sit in with a reading group."

In the last month of the school year his parents, both professional people, had withdrawn him, saying they did not approve the school's policy of delaying reading for Jeffrey and could not accept the judgment that he was immature.

"He just needs to be made to work," the father said grimly. "His mother will teach him to read during her summer vacation. We wish to enter him in the second grade in September."

Jeffrey had failed second grade in the private school he entered in September. He had also repeated fourth grade. It was after this that his parents had returned him to his first school.

Now the father declared that the boy was a dullard and the mother continued the coaching by force at home.

Teacher and principal pondered and planned once more. How could they help without frightening Jeff and setting up all his emotional resistances again? Were there any new easy books to tempt a boy of thirteen-and-a-half? Was there such a thing as a picture book of baseball heroes? What could he do at school

that would stir pride in his parents and create in them some joy in him?

What resources should they draw upon? Would the psychologist have any ideas? Was the personality damage by any chance so deep that the psychiatrist, attached to the school system, ought to see him? Were there any of the tricks and devices of method, workbooks, flash cards, games that hadn't been used and that might be interesting if employed individually?

"Those things that make reading an unnatural thing for children in the first place!" the principal said as she checked them off. "Hair of the dog that bit him!" commented Mrs. Shubert. "No, I don't think any of the tricks will help. Somehow we have to help Jeff find out that reading isn't the horror he thinks it is. If his parents had faced the fact that he is a slow-growing child and he had started to read at seven-and-a-half, perhaps; if they had praised and encouraged every step of the way, he would probably be reading at a fourth-grade level now."

"It can't fail," she thought. "Mrs. Shubert, who has given him security and appreciates him for all the fine qualities he does have, will find a way to get him started. What can be done for the parents—how can they learn to love their child for what he is, and cease to show him their disappointment over what they had planned for him to be?"

### ***The Class Rejected Tom Henry***

Allan Dean, the fifth-grade teacher, put his head inside Miss Harling's door after school closed and said, "I got some real teaching done today. I said to myself, 'This is it! This is not record keeping, money counting, or just holding kids to school routine and keeping them reasonably quiet when nature has made them naturally noisy. And it's not re-

hashing things from books that have already said it better.' You know, I'm ashamed when I have them do that, but I've got so much to learn before I can do the *real* thing often."

"What happened? Tell me about it?"

"You know Tom Henry, don't you? Well, he comes from the bad end of Crocker Street. He smells, and he sometimes talks smut on the playground. The girls won't go near him, and the boys haven't cared for him either, except the few that whisper and smirk over things that he tells them."

Miss Harling nodded. She knew other things, too. She knew that the young teacher had supervised early showers in the basement, bringing good pine scented soap and his younger brother's old shirts from home for Tom Henry. She knew that he kept Tom Henry after school to clean boards and stack books and that long conversations went on in the fifth-grade teacher's room, while they got the room ready for the next day.

"He really stood up and made a report to the class," Allan went on. "His father keeps honeybees out in that old rundown orchard. He was so interested he worked on his talk, planned it, got first things first—organization, you know. He stood up there, looked the class in the eye, and told them all about it. He described the honey-taking so that they all sat on the edge of their chairs."

"He learned other things as well, as how to make a report, didn't he?"

"Ye-es," the younger teacher agreed. "Come to think of it I suppose he has *been* learning. Since he's cleaned up he sits up—doesn't slouch in his seat. Since he's had a chance to ask questions about a lot of things above board he doesn't whisper around outside. Since he's been working on this bee thing he has read lots more than ever before. I think he has learned too, that his color



doesn't matter to his classmates. He had been pretty strongly of the opinion that it did.

"He said one day, lately, 'The kids like Amelia, don't they?' And they do. She's chosen for everything, and Amelia's his color. Somehow he hadn't drawn the parallel before.

"Today, when he described the taking of honey those fifth graders really rose to the occasion. Tom Henry went home stepping high with the feeling of their appreciation. I think maybe he will be all right from here on in."

Miss Harling rejoiced with Allan and did not tell him that it would take many experiences of appreciation by his peers before Tom Henry was all right. She knew how over and over she would have to give affection to Jan Lee before the little girl would cease to cry in school.

### ***Whose Responsibility?***

Mrs. Leis, a court worker, had told her about a little girl, warped by fear, who had lied so successfully in court that the judge had dismissed the charge of brutality against her mother. The child's stripes had faded from her skin before the teacher had been able to get her complaint to the proper ears. The court had returned her to the parent. Mrs. Leis had added despairingly, "They let the mother transfer her out of that school, away from *that* teacher!"

"Who let?" Miss Harling wondered now. Whose responsibility are the children?

She thought of the problems of the older boys. Mr. Shepherd worked with them in a starkly under-privileged area. They were deprived not only of sufficient food, of adequate shelter, but, more important, Mr. Shepherd thought, they were deprived of the values that society

normally seeks to establish in its children.

"How can I get these boys to believe in truth telling and honest earning, when the swaggering youth on the corner sports good clothes and a wrist watch he buys with the proceeds of dope peddling?"

"You get it by being *you*, their teacher, Mr. Shepherd," a clear-eyed girl had said. Miss Harling had heard too, that he did just that—help many boys establish different values and seek a better way of life than their neighborhoods offered as examples.

"What a world," thought Miss Harling, "riven by war, fear, and hate, it is a breeding ground of quandaries for little children. Some of them face physical hardship—hunger, living in rat-ridden tenements, and unnecessary disease. Some of them face worse—no love from parents or anyone close to them. For parents who had no love themselves can give none. The culture that is built on marriage and a stable home for children somehow cannot ensure that all children have these. School, their second home, brands some of them as failures, forgetting that its job is to help a child grow, not to serve as a sorting machine, casting the big peas to one pile, and the little peas in the other.

"This culture that tells a child to speak the truth, but trains him to lie—what quandaries it poses for our little children."

But Miss Harling never brooded more than five minutes at a time on such depressing generalizations. As she put on her hat she thought, "I believe I will just stop by and see Jan Lee's grandmother. Maybe those poor old folks will be encouraged and treat her a bit more lovingly if I just tell them what a dear little girl I think she is."

## Space for the Spirit

*Let's make "room for the mind to stretch up; for feelings to expand; for imagination to fly free!" Practices that liberate or oppress are discussed by Maud Ellsworth, associate professor, University of Kansas, Lawrence.*

THE WISE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR turned to the window.

"I've been looking at those great trees in the park," he said. "When this town started they were mere saplings. Nobody worried or fretted over them, but look at them now! How did they reach that strength and height?"

"Oh, trees," replied the Young Teacher, "they just grow by themselves. How to get a child to develop in all directions at once is something else."

"I wonder," mused the Wise School Administrator, his eyes still on the trees.

"Growth is in the very nature of the tree and in the nature of the child, too. If the conditions in which the tree finds itself are right, up it shoots, without anyone touching it because its life purpose is to grow upward. And so it is with the child. *If the conditions are right* you cannot keep him from growing, because God put the power of growth in him, too."

"It is simple with the trees," said the Young Teacher. "You plant them in the ground, give them plenty of room, and wait. The right conditions for trees are not complicated."

"Plenty of room," repeated the Wise School Administrator, and nodded. "That's a first condition for the children. I am not thinking of physical space, although that is important, too. But there

must be room for the mind to stretch up; for feelings to expand; for imagination to fly free!"

"Isn't there always room for that?" asked the Young Teacher.

The Wise School Administrator replied with another question.

"If you put a heavy plank on a little sapling, what would happen?"

"It would grow crooked, I should think," was the answer, "and pale. If no one removed the plank, there could never be a tree like those across the street."

"The young ones," the Wise School Administrator said, "are all too often stopped or twisted because their spirits are held down by rigid, immovable practices. For one of your good conditions, give them room!"

"Like letting Tommy say that he thinks 'The Blue Boy' is a silly picture?" asked the Young Teacher.

"Or even letting the song period run overtime fifteen minutes," added the Wise School Administrator with a smile.

### *Tulips and Turkeys*

Every child should live in an atmosphere of freedom, for, unless he can work and play without rigid restrictions and adult domination, normal development cannot take place. Children must be taught to use their freedom well, and to surrender some of it for the good of all. The more fixed the routine, the more inflexible the processes, the more exactly directed the activities in the school, the less independent and resourceful and creative the children will be.

As teachers, we should survey all



areas of school life to discover and encourage the practices that liberate. We need to discover and discard the practices that oppress.

Art education is making a fine contribution to the total growth of children wherever children are allowed to reshape and express their own experiences through materials. Here we find one area where, "the mind may stretch up, the feelings expand, and the imagination fly free!" The child who creates something of worth to himself gains a sense of self-realization and makes a better adjustment to life because of it.

There are still many schools where, in the name of art, practices harmful to the growth of personality are found. Tracing and copying pictures, filling in color books, and working from set patterns are some of the most common.

The following of meaningless patterns makes the child dependent on others, stops up emotional outlet, and kills spontaneity.

"If the child continues the use of given patterns," says Viktor Lowenfeld, art educator and psychologist, "the end effect will be similar to the one of emotional maladjustment. Accustomed to dependency and rigidity in his creative work, the child behavior reactions in general will reflect this tendency because the child in his reactions does not distinguish between his different activities. They all reflect the total growth of the child. Thus, when copy work prevents the child from facing and expressing his own world of experience, the child may ultimately lose confidence in his own work and resort to stereotyped repetitions as a visible escape mechanism."

It is often said that color books teach neatness and that children like them; therefore children should have color books. The habit of orderliness, out of which neatness comes, cannot be copied,

but is arrived at through the discovery of its place in one's own creative work. The liking children may have for coloring given patterns is not strong argument for their use. Children also sometimes like to hurt each other, to stay up past midnight, or to eat harmful food.

Examples of the same stereotypes, found in art classes many years ago, persist in raising their insipid outlines in modern schools. The tulip stereotype has not passed away completely. The Indian in warbonnet is still being tooled tediously on metal foil. The Scotty dog is with us yet.

In a fifth-grade classroom we find thirty copies of a covered wagon, each as exactly like the uninteresting pattern as it can be made.

"The children learned to draw wagons very well," explains the teacher, eyeing the pictures with satisfaction.

But drawing cannot be learned by totalitarian dictation! There is no one way to draw a wagon, a way to be swallowed like a pill and disgorged when needed. And where is aroused awareness? What is happening to the will to explore? How tightly, here, is the lid being screwed down on the development of each one's confidence in his own peculiar powers?

Once I saw twenty-seven cut paper parrots perched glumly along the top of a chalk board. Every feather on every bird tallied as to color, shape, and size. What opportunity is there in this class for emotional release from tension? What chance did the *child* have to exercise judgment, make choices, plan or take responsibility? How can any spirited group conversation follow this problem that will further respect for the contributions and opinions of others?

And still arises the turkey, drawn on the board by the teacher (circle by circle!) and copied carefully in the mid-

dle of the page by the dutiful second-grade children.

"I believe," the teacher says with conviction, "that we should give the children some basic vocabulary forms, and let them go on from there."

Heaven help us, if we continue to think that a dead turkey is basic!

For the most part, children do not rebel outwardly at the suppression of their creative life. Many of them do not know that there is a way through which their own experiences may be expressed in materials. And the further the domination goes the more tightly held down they become by the weight of an increasing conviction that they have neither ideas to express nor the capability to express them if they had.

One six-year-old, new at the business of both school and art expression, stood up firmly on his sturdy legs and tried, at least, for his rights.

"Don't put that blue streak across your paper for the sky!" cried his irritated teacher. "Don't you know the sky comes down to the trees?"

"No!" the boy shouted back angrily. "The sky don't come down! Haven't you ever looked up there?"

### ***What About Workbooks***

In April 1952, the Eastern Arts Association published in its Research Bulletin studies of the effect of workbooks on the creative concepts of children. The foreword specifically states that this publication makes no attempt toward wide or definite pronouncements as to the effect of workbooks. It is hoped that it will stimulate further examination.

One study reported in the Bulletin has to do with the use of reading and arithmetic workbooks in which copying and coloring are required. Among the workbooks examined, one (arithmetic) was found to have 841 symbols to be copied.

Persons doing the research discovered that the creative work of children who used the workbooks was affected in two major ways:

1. The size of the children's own drawings became smaller after copying workbook symbols.

2. The imposing of the workbook form interfered with the expression of the child's own creative concept.

When we recognize the fact that all school practices affect the child's total personality it seems evident that the effects of copying from workbooks should have continued study.

The common assertion that imitation gives children a feeling of security and a pride in accomplishment unattainable through their own crude creations cannot be upheld. It has been my observation that it is the parents and teachers who are made happy by the stereotypes. The firmest foundation for developing a sense of security in a child is his growing ability to cope with life as he finds it.

Hundreds of instances can be cited of children who—unable to talk, to paint, to read or to take their rightful places in social activities—have had opened up to them roads to new behavior patterns through the removal of restrictions that barred the exercise of their own individual creative powers.

A timid child, who wept at everything, forgot to cry when given the opportunity to work alone at painting. One day, after several of her first uncertain pieces of work had been put on the bulletin board with those of the other children, she showed her delight in a growing freedom by means of a large, colorful painting of herself.

"Look!" she said to the teacher. "Here I am out in the yard, just a throwin' strings ev'rywhere!"

Tension, in an atmosphere of respect



for honest effort, was gone. In its place was an honest accomplishment, the creating of which brought both peace and stimulation to the creator.

### ***Creating Is Work and Play***

The process of creative art is, at once, work and play. According to Dr. Karl Menninger one of the reasons that play is necessary to good health is its freedom from dominance or surveillance.

Many teachers of exceptional children deny such children the opportunity for self-expression. Most of these teachers contend that children of low mentality are unable to do creative work. Others believe that the constructive effects of creative expression are as much to be desired for retarded, as for normal children.

An investigation by Henry Schaeffer-Simmern of the creative self-expression of delinquents, subnormal persons and others, shows that individuals with a low intelligence quotient can create within the limitations of their general development. Mr. Schaeffer-Simmern reports that the happiness and social adjustment of the persons studied were affected favorably by self-expression.

While widespread studies as to the creative accomplishment of exceptional children have not been made, it is reasonable to assume that constant dictation is as bad for one child as another.

### ***Other Limitations of Space***

Stereotypes in the art class are not, of course, the only influences in school that prevent child growth by suppressing freedom. Wherever class routine is unchangeable, wherever deadlines are unbending, wherever children are prevented from moving about naturally, or thought is made to go in prescribed channels—here the ceiling is lowered on individual development.

Doctors are not prescribing exactly the same treatment considered best in the 1920's. Born twenty-five years ago, my young nephew was started in life by the rigid rules thought to be good at that time, "Feed by the clock, only; do not pick him up if he cries; no rocking him to sleep," and all the rest.

Now the word has swept across the country, "It's *all right* to hold the baby! The doctors say we *should* feed him when he's hungry!"

"The new cue word, we find, is no longer authority; it is leadership," says Hughes Mearns.

The knowledge—that imposed patterns in education are harmful—was old long ago. Can we not move faster to match our practices to the knowledge? To do this we must first clear away the obstacles and make room for our own growth. For until we become more flexible ourselves, it is not likely that we can see clearly the need for elastic and changeable surroundings for children. We are never too young, nor too old to grow.

Mr. Mearns gives us hope.

"My discovery," he asserts, "is that pure individuality never dies, that it may still be reached at any age and be trained to assert its birthright of freedom; my further belief is that this education of the creative self is the open door to a wise and peaceful way of life and that if widely employed, it might even be the hope of a tortured world."

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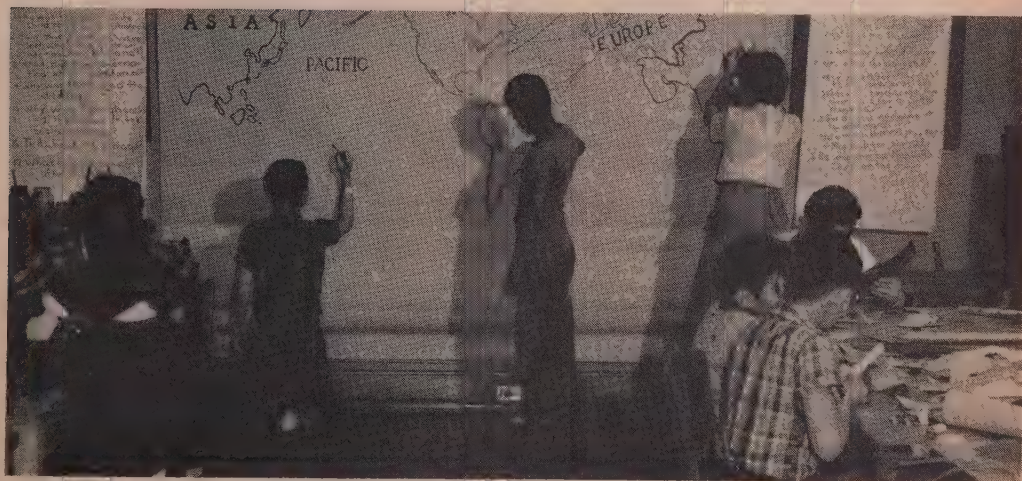


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# Reading and Personal Satisfaction

*What common elements can we find in the situations in which children find satisfaction in being able to read? What are the implications? Roma Gans is professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.*

YES, READING IS A VERY INVOLVED AND complex process. Any teacher or parent working closely with children who are learning to read can give testimony to support this fact.

But all too often we seem to be aware only of the learning-to-read process and we fail to give adequate attention to the deep and personal satisfactions which come even to the very young reader. These satisfactions are often hard to analyze, define, weigh, or measure, yet those who observe children even casually catch many evidences of them.

Many of us have been fascinated by the obvious delight of an infant barely passed twelve months who looks intently at a magazine or book. It may be without pictures. What catches his interest may not be observable to us, but something in that browsing is obviously satisfying to him.

The two-year-old snuggled tightly against his six-year-old sister who is reading to him from a primer which is now her favorite book surely reveals two kinds of satisfaction; the satisfaction in what he hears, and in the close chummy attention which he is receiving. Both may be so interwoven as to create a general over-all good feeling. The six-year-old, with the intent young listener beside her and the chance to exercise her newly acquired reading skill, has a genuine sense of well-being.

So, too, with the five-year-old walking

beside his father as he approaches a sign which he recognizes. "Look Dad, I can read that. It says *danger*." What a feeling of success, of power, of growth—of inner satisfaction which if translated into his own words probably would be, "I can tell what some words are when I see them. I must be all right."

At home and in school it is not uncommon to notice a child sitting in his own fashion reading or browsing through a book unaware of the talking, working, and bustle of others close to him. He is, correctly speaking, "lost" in a book. Whether it is the challenge of reading word after word, or the fascination with the ideas, or the pictures, we may not always be able to tell even after talking with him. But for him there has been something rewarding in those quiet moments with his personal reading.

A teacher noticed a restless nine-year-old of her third grade standing almost motionless before a hardware store window in which a large fish was on display. So intent was he that he did not notice when she stepped beside him. She noticed that his eyes were focused on the brief account of the prize catch. Later his teacher commented, "I was surprised at his interest, because he never seems to settle down long enough to be interested in reading."

There are other important satisfactions worthy of our notice. Take the case of rugged ten-year-old Tommy. On



day he dashed noisily into his home and yelled excitedly, "Ma, there's a whole exhibit about African violets at the library—books, pictures, and instructions about everything." His mother, a novice in African violet sprouting, had revealed interest in her pursuit in such manner that her son, coming upon this veritable avalanche of material, couldn't wait to inform her. This same boy overheard his father say, "I've often wondered what the ice fields of northwest Canada look like." About a month later while browsing through a book in the school library Tommy came across a photograph of such an ice field. He borrowed the book and jubilantly carried it home so that his father's query might be answered. What pleasures for a child—and for parents—to be playing the role of the one who discovers, who finds, and who knows and then helps the adults.

Often youngsters surprise us with what interests and intrigues them. Young Judy, a happy, not-too-serious fifth grader, came up to her teacher one day, arithmetic book in hand and announced, "Look at these problems. I think I know how to read each one and can work them. I did two. Are they right?" Reading arithmetic problems had not been one of Judy's accomplishments. Suddenly, on her own, she struggled with their compact style and her exultant feeling over success was apparent.

### *What Are These Satisfactions?*

What generalizations can one test out from these few observations? Certainly one is caught by the fact that each case shows *the personal quality* in the satisfaction for each child. Second, each situation seemed *just right for the young reader*. One can readily imagine a child compelled to read to an unwilling young

brother and see both resentful of the reading as well as the companionship. Or one can sense the way a fifth grader, assigned to read arithmetic problems with more care, might not only resent the reading but fail miserably at it. And a third generalization worth testing out in additional observations is that personal and fitting reading experiences develop *a sense of conquest*, of adequacy, which is very heartening to the child.

These three points seem very basic to a child's wholesome growth as a reader—namely, that he have opportunity to read in a variety of ways satisfying to him, that we as teachers and parents help him plan a daily life conducive to such personal reading moments, and, furthermore that we honor these experiences not as the "extra" or the "unassigned" dribblets in the child's reading program but rather as the interest developers, reading motivators, social-behavior promotors and inner-self builders which, from casual observations, they seem to be.

A consideration of these three points may cause us to examine some of our emphasis upon reading groups, routine sharing of reading, and many other common practices. In some situations the teaching of reading may resemble the health lesson in which a child, less than fifty miles from New York City, was taught that milk was the almost perfect food. It was good for him. "But," he added while reporting on this health lesson to a visitor, "we don't get milk in our school. We just learn about it. I never tasted milk."

Reading, when properly guided in home, school, and library makes a real contribution to a child's satisfactions in living, hence to his inner serenity and richness.

## Research and Reading Instruction

*What does recent research say about grouping? About individualized reading instruction? About experience reading and the basal reader? About formal reading readiness and the experience reading readiness program? What further research would you suggest? George W. Bond, State Teachers College, New Paltz, New York, has compiled some of the answers to these questions.*

OUR MODERN SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE sometimes criticized because parents feel we are failing to teach well the basic subjects. This criticism causes much concern among many teachers who are diligently attempting to do a good job. But should we as teachers be upset by the questions parents raise about our methods? It is wholesome for us to have parents question our techniques. As Witty and Coomer point out, classroom methods for teaching reading have been challenged since 1838.

These questions have served to stimulate educators to more and more research and the findings of this research have resulted in a constant improvement in our reading programs. Reading is being taught better in our schools today than ever before. The reading demands placed on children and adults are greater than ever, despite the role of radio and television. Nevertheless, parents and all who are concerned with the education of children cannot afford to relax, for much remains to be known about this complex skill we call reading.

Sometimes the criticisms of reading programs are based on isolated cases. It is true that there are children in schools today who cannot read. These same children are required by law to attend school, but many lack the necessary

mental maturity to master the school program. At the same time, there are others who cannot read or who read very poorly, yet have considerable mental ability and can be helped. These children profit by our continued research.

A glance in the *Educational Index* quickly discloses hundreds and hundreds of published papers on the teaching of reading. Not all these articles meet the rigid standards of scientific research but all attempt to do one thing—to share knowledge, experiences, and findings concerning reading. The factor of primary importance in all these publications is the expanding concept of the reading act. Over the years we have learned that reading is a skill, and learning to read requires a knowledge of all the facets of that skill. We now know that factors such as emotional stability, vision, the family situation, and school adjustment are just as important in learning to read as are phonetic analysis or a knowledge of prefixes and root words. As our fund of information grows, teachers are doing a better job in the classroom, thus preventing many reading difficulties.

We cannot discuss all the trends of teaching reading based on modern research findings. Five areas will be presented, with some conflicting points of



view in each, to let the reader draw his own inferences, make his own adjustments to his situation, and perhaps to point up the need for further research in certain areas.

The areas to be covered are: (a) grouping, (b) individualizing reading instruction, (c) experience reading and the basal reader, (d) formal reading readiness and the experience reading readiness program, and (e) suggested research.

### *Grouping*

Strangely, few recent studies in the field of reading have been concerned with grouping children, although almost every teacher and clinician seems to assume that grouping is being done and is necessary. The most interesting sources of information are the recently published books written as textbooks or teachers' reference books. Some of these go into much detail concerning the need for grouping and different factors to be considered in establishing groups, while one of the most widely used books doesn't even discuss grouping as a topic.

Among the writings of leaders in the field of reading, the following recommendations are found most frequently: (a) grouping must be flexible, (b) grouping must be done gradually, (c) different types of groups must be used for different phases of the reading program, and (d) three groups are used most successfully by most teachers.

Few authorities now recommend grouping based entirely on chronological age, mental age, or standardized reading tests. Rather, the trend seems to be toward a sincere effort to meet in the best way the needs of each child. Perhaps we might call it, as Maude Hunter suggests, a "common sense" approach.

Since the needs of any group are many and varied, knowing children thoroughly

seems essential. However, Russell pointed out six years ago that there is no one superior method for adjusting to individual differences. Among the different types of groups suggested for meeting individual needs are:

- Grouping for basal instruction
- Grouping for slow learning children
- Grouping for experience enrichment
- Grouping for remedial instruction
- Grouping for recreational reading
- Grouping for reading designed for personal development
- Grouping for interest and motivation patterns
- Grouping to provide for bilingual or foreign language backgrounds
- Grouping for interpretive skills
- Grouping for phonetic skills
- Grouping for visual, auditory, and motor skills
- Grouping for re-education

This list contains only a portion of the information a teacher encounters when looking for help on establishing reading groups. Obviously the list is contradictory and frightening. Furthermore, no systematic attempt has been made by investigators to study methods for grouping through the grade levels. Numerous discussions are confined to grouping in the primary grades, and while some techniques can be used successfully at all grade levels there is need for more careful analysis and detailed investigations of grouping methods in the middle and upper grades.

### *Individualizing Reading Instruction*

In almost all schools visited by the writer during the past four years, reading programs were of a dualistic nature. An instructional program followed carefully the basal textbook-workbook development, with perhaps three groups using three different basal readers and workbooks, supposedly to meet individual needs. With the instructional program the teachers developed a recrea-

tional reading program for the stated purpose of meeting additional needs of children. Only in the recreational program were any evidences found of individualizing reading instruction.

Recently published research indicates that perhaps the total reading program can be individualized profitably. Frances Maib reports that, in her school situation, grouping was not the answer to individual needs: the children doing seat work while others were reading became bored, competition within the group was bad, and under the group plan each child received only about four minutes of time from the teacher. In beginning, individualization of the program was explained carefully and the child was assured of needed help. Now each child is busy, interest is high, achievement is better.

Mabel Johnson, another classroom teacher, was dissatisfied with her program although she was using three different basal readers and workbooks with her three groups. She decided on an individual reading program and natural grouping. Taking a fifth-grade class of thirty-six children, she found an initial range of 3.1 to 8.6 with a median score of 5.5 on a standardized test. During the school year the children were enthusiastic, parents felt the program was sound, and many more books were read than during the previous term. At the end of the school year her reading test range was from 4.4 to 9.4 with a median score of 7.2. It was felt by the teacher that her group had shown growth.

Questions have been raised concerning how many needs of children can be met through the individualized program. David Russell goes so far as to suggest that reading, even individualized reading, isn't always good for children and that only some reading is good for children. Others found seriously retarded readers did not need to be disassociated

from group activities to be successful, if the needs of each child were known. Witty feels that all instructional programs must do the following:

- Cultivate mastery of the skills needed in effective reading
- Recognize various purposes and needs for reading
- Depend on other experiences and activities operating in association with reading
- Seek the fulfilment or extension of interests

Dolch further cautions that the modern approach is to consider children's purposes, for they motivate children to read; but teacher purposes are also necessary to make a complete program.

Finally, it has been suggested that reading instruction, whether in the conventional groups or individualized, is not the cure for all children's problems. Children who have emotional blocks frequently have difficulty learning to read. At the same time, a child who experiences constant failure in his attempts to learn to read exhibits undesirable emotional patterns. Osburn notes that emotional blocks are best understood by studying the series of processes of which they are a part. They are the result of frustrations caused either by static conditions or by opposing forces.

### ***Experience Reading and the Basal Reader***

Feelings sometimes run high and perhaps some of our published research findings are a result of the desire to prove a point of view concerning a basal reader type of program vs. an experience reading type of program. Some teachers feel that basic reading materials are the core of our reading program because they provided continuity of vocabulary, gradual introduction of new words, and repetition of those words already introduced. Laura Zirbes points out the non-experience approach tends to crowd out



the functional relationship with direct experience, spontaneous oral language that deals with direct experience, the recording of such spontaneous oral language in script or in writing, and the reconversion of such recorded experience into oral forms.

Those who take a middle-of-the-road point of view believe that children need experience materials, basal readers, and supplementary reading. However, a study by Russell and Wulfinf indicates that the introduction of supplementary materials into the reading program does not make any noticeable difference in the final results. E. W. Dolch warns that all youngsters do not climb the visual ladder of sight words in the basal readers. It is naive to think they do. What is done for those using basal series who learn only one-half or one-third of the new words?

Yoakam suggests twelve reasons why basal readers should be used in teaching reading, including:

- Psychological data favor the development of basic skills through the use of systematic instruction.
- Basal reading instruction always reflects current theories concerning curriculum methods.
- There is danger of overemphasizing the fact of individual differences.
- Individual differences are well provided for through the flexible use of basal materials as now commonly advised by the authors and publishers of basal reading systems.
- Basal reading systems are being adapted to the current theories of child growth.
- Without the use of basal reading materials, it would be impossible to teach millions of American children to read.

### ***Formal Reading Readiness and the Experience Reading Readiness Program***

Most teachers in the primary grades agree that reading readiness is an extremely important factor but not all agree on how to attain it. However, a very thought-provoking article by Glenn

McCracken recently raised the question, "Have We Over-Emphasized the Readiness Factor?" A study was conducted in the New Castle, Pa., schools from 1947 to 1952, because so many children were passing through school without learning to read. The feeling was that greater emphasis on readiness only tended to place the blame on the child. Using a basal series, all children were given formal reading instruction regardless of their apparent readiness. For two years, in five sections of first grade, all reading scores were higher and there were no low scores. No child has been an inadequate reader.

In attempting to isolate the factors comprising reading readiness, different types of growth become apparent. Actually, readiness implies a certain level of maturity, but children are a composite of four and perhaps five kinds of maturity—physical, mental, emotional, social, and perhaps spiritual. It is necessary for a child to attain certain levels in each of these before reading instruction begins. Those who follow a formal approach to readiness tend to emphasize heavily the physical and mental growth of children, while some who use an experience approach may overlook the physical and mental. Some even suggest delaying boys' entrance to school because they mature more slowly than girls.

Brownell suggests that readiness is more than maturity and comes or occurs as appropriate behavior patterns are organized and reorganized. The patterns of behavior, he says, come through the learner's own experiences.

### ***Suggested Research***

William S. Gray has noted that many changes have occurred in teaching over the past years, but nowhere have they been more radical and significant than in the field of reading. Research has

been important. It has resulted in the enlargement of the concept of reading, in continued progress in teaching all the aspects of reading, in identifying the series of complex activities comprising reading, in adjusting teaching procedures, and in clearing evidence.

In reviewing recent research in the four areas covered by this article, certain needed research projects come to mind:

- How to determine readiness for reading in the content area?
- Are children with reading problems handicapped when taking group intelligence tests?
- How do superior children read?
- Is longer pre-first grade training helpful for boys?
- Should standardized reading readiness tests use different norms for boys than for girls?
- What influence does good spelling instruction have on reading achievement?
- When should study skills be taught?

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## Stephen and Books

*Here's Stephen again, learning to read. His mother, Mrs. Maurice Long, Cumberland, Maryland, has actually caught the process in this account.*

IT WAS A "BOOK-READING" FAMILY. HIS father, sister, grandmothers, and myself all liked books. He followed me around all day with a book in his hand in his pre-school days. "When I go to school, I want to see the books," he said. Everyone was certain he would be a bookworm.

In first grade, the teacher said that tests showed he was ready to read. His eyes and ears were good, too. He liked his classmates and teacher, and he liked her in a special way when she read or told a story.

I did not expect him to *read* books right away. I knew that he was having many other school experiences—playing train with blocks, having singing games, and conversations, working with clay and crayons. Reading, I knew, would come later. But after I knew he had been reading a couple of months, I began to be puzzled. December, January, February, March—no books. He brought his basal reader home occasionally after he had finished a unit and read with gusto, but that was all he read at home.

"Yes, he can read books fluently, now, on preprimer level. He enjoys reading with his group," his teacher said.

I could not duplicate the classroom with the stimulus of other children, but I could try to get him interested in some other books on the same level. Stephen and I went to the library and chose some books. He opened them (if he were asked), but he picked them up as if they were heavy and put them down as if they

were heavy. And he reminded me of a worm the way he squirmed, but not a bookworm. He read a few dutifully, without difficulty, so that he could tell his teacher he had read a "library book."

"All right," I thought, "I'll starve you out. I'll make you hungry for books. I won't read to you and I'll take the books back. Perhaps children today have too many books and too easy access to them."

So I "starved" my boy out for a couple of months. I thought he would turn to books then, but he didn't. He turned to "Gangbusters" on the radio. And if the teacher assigned the group a story to read of six pages in a supplementary book, he read those six pages—but never six and a half.

When school ended, I thought Stephen would be bored some hot summer day. So I went to the library again and got some preprimers and primers, which I placed at strategic places around the house where he couldn't help but see them. He did see them. He used them, too—to make walls in a ranch house. After he used one to swat a fly, I took them reluctantly back to the library.

Vacation months passed and he never opened a book. At times, I wondered whether I should insist that he read. I did not force him, however. I recalled that I (and the teacher) had rushed my daughter a little and her reading became mostly stammering until we realized our error.

Perhaps, in spite of mastering the primer vocabulary at school, Stephen was, in some way, actually not ready to read books although he still liked to hear books read occasionally.

The day before school opened in

September, I checked on his oral reading skills. I had expected that he would have forgotten a great deal, but I was shocked at the way he read:

I like . . . . . to ride.

Then (no, they) . . . . . look, like to ride, too.

Her (I mean, here) we go.

"Maybe he will be good in other things," I consoled myself as I emptied his pockets of string, stones, glasscutter, and police badge, and started him off to second grade. After all, why should books come first with him because they did with me? I would just stop worrying about him. He was young yet—seven years and two months.

At the first PTA conference, I expected the teacher to tell me that she had placed Stephen in a less advanced reading group, and I would have agreed.

She said, "He's doing fine. He's going to be one of my best readers."

"But," I began. Then I decided to just look the other way for awhile. I became busy with other things and didn't ask him to read for a long while. (He didn't volunteer, either.) I noticed that he read some assigned reading once or twice a week but that was all. He and his playmates were in their club house during the long autumn evenings. His pals sometimes brought a book, but all that I could see Stephen had was a tablet full of car license numbers.

Toward the end of October, I said, "Stephen, there are some new books at the library—a couple about Indians, too. Wouldn't you like to go along and choose one for yourself while I get mine?"

"Shucks, no. Not now."

All this time he was "holding his own" with his group at school. Once, when he condescended "to read a page," I could see that he was gaining rapidly in word recognition and rate of reading. He told me some of the stories in his

basal reader. He mentioned a couple of times that he had "looked at" a book at school (but he didn't say he read it). His face was still absent among the children who clustered around new books in the library asking the librarian to "please, please, save that book for me."

November came. One evening, he puffed in from play and said he would like to read me a story about a monkey.

"Oh, I'm sorry," I told him. "You came to see me at the wrong time. I'm going out this evening."

"But you just have to listen to it. It's very funny. Honest, I think you'd like it better than the *Saturday Evening Post*."

I smiled to myself. Perhaps all along I should have let him sell me books instead of trying to sell them to him.

The little salesman, however, did not repeat this performance very often. Perhaps I did not show enough consumer resistance! But I began to have hope. He did seem to be gaining enthusiasm. And he read his Christmas cards.

At Christmas time, I thought he would surely include a book in his requests . . . but he didn't. At last I could stand it no longer.

"Don't you want a book?" I asked.

"Well . . . I'd like one for you to read to me," was his answer.

I did my shopping rather hurriedly this year and just picked out one book from the dime store. It was one of the Golden Books, *The Seven Sneezes*. I read it to him once. The next day I almost sneezed seven times myself when he gently took it out of my hand.

"Mother, I'll read this to you."

"I don't know," I said doubtfully, "It's more difficult than the books you've been reading in school. Some of the words, the long sentences . . ."

But he did read it. It took him a long time because when he didn't read a page



as smoothly as he desired, he would read it over again.

And he said, "I don't want to say fum-a-diddle if the book says fum-a-diddle."

He took time out for laughing, too. When he finished, I said, "Wonderful. How did you do it?"

"Aw, nothing to it."

It seemed to me that the books he enjoyed were all humorous ones such as *Donald Duck and His Nephews* and now this one. I would get him more of this type, I thought enthusiastically. Perhaps a "funny bone" was his key to bookland.

I said, "What books would you like to read most of all, if you could?"

He stopped laughing. He licked his tongue over his lips. "Well, most of all, I guess, I would like to read the *Geographic Magazine* and a book about older times. I can do that next Christmas."

A "funny bone," indeed!!

It's January now. He's seven years and six months old. The times that he comes "to read to me" are more frequent. He even asked me when I was going to the library next.

"I'd like to read to you about Ellis Island. I bet you didn't know about this." He read the following:

"Near the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, there is a little island called Ellis Island. Big boats that come to America from other countries stop here. Workers come from the (wait a minute, don't tell me) . . . Workers come from the government to talk to these people and to help them to become American . . . cit . . . citizens."

When he finished, he put the book on the stand as if it were gold. I thought back to the time, just four months ago, when he might have used this book for fly-swatting.

No, I don't think he will ever be a bookworm. (Who wants a bookworm?) And I think he will collect marbles and cereal box pictures a lot faster than he does books. I also believe he will be a social reader for awhile; he will continue to want to read with some person or group or for some person or group. He hasn't yet discovered the joys of reading by yourself, but I am confident he will.

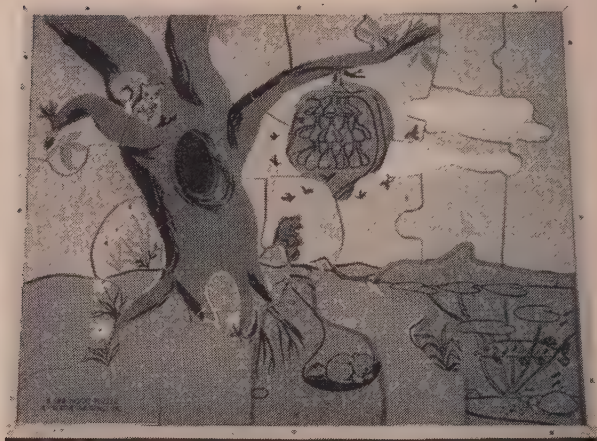
### *Two Years Later*

As I reviewed this little story written about two years ago, I thought: How silly of me to have worried for fear Stephen would not value and use books. He was having new experiences all the time at home and school, wasn't he? He was learning the techniques of reading. He was living life to the hilt! Then what could be more natural than that he should turn to books which are but an extension and clarification of life itself?

This week I observed him reading: *The History of the Johnstown Flood* (his grandmother inspired that); one chapter of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* (Lost in a Cave); part of a chapter in a high school science textbook—an attempt to find out more about electricity because the wiring of his electrical train gadgets seemed "to be crooked"; *The Secret of the Rosewood Box* by Orton ("I think my school-room would enjoy hearing that one"); a few chapters in the *Bible* ("The words kind of roll along"); three comic books.

And far from getting him to read books, my problem may soon be keeping them from him. One night recently after the household had settled, I saw flickers of light in Stephen's room and after going to investigate I saw him hunched down under the covers with a flashlight and a *book!*

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271. See Inside the Airport  
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273. Up Above and Down Below

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# NEWS and REVIEWS

## News HERE and THERE . . .

By MARY E. LEEPER

### *Told Under Spacious Skies*

ACEI announces that the seventh book in the well-known Umbrella Series, *Told Under Spacious Skies*, may now be found in local book shops. This collection of present-day regional stories of American life, by famous authors, will be welcomed by teachers, parents, and children. It has been compiled by ACEI's Committee on Literature, Mary Morse of Chicago, chairman.

This latest volume is dedicated

To the mid-century child  
"From sea to shining sea."

Lois Lenski has written the foreword. William Moyers is the illustrator. Macmillan Company, New York, is the publisher. Members of ACEI, when ordering, should ask to be billed at the special discount to members. Regular price, \$3.

### *NEA Executive Secretary Inaugurated*

On October 12 and 13 an education conference in Washington, D. C., marked the inauguration of William George Carr as executive secretary of the National Education Association.

It seems most appropriate that Dr. Carr's inauguration was observed by the holding of a forward-looking conference under the theme, "The Teaching Profession and the American Future." Educators from all parts of the United States and officials representing more than a hundred organizations participated in the conference. The National Education Association proposes to use the results of the discussions as one of the guiding elements in planning the activities of this professional organization of teachers.

Dr. Carr first joined the staff of the National Education Association in 1929. His work has been most directly connected with those activities of the NEA which deal with research, policy, and international relations.

During the administration of Executive Secretary Willard E. Givens, the NEA has become the world's largest professional organization with 875,000 members, 32 Departments, and 24 Commissions and Committees.

Its headquarters staff, located in Washington, includes more than 400 persons engaged in various special fields of education.

### *Legislative Worker's Guide*

A 42 page bulletin, *Worksheets on Legislative Action*, is ready for distribution. The guide was prepared cooperatively by representatives of nine organizations in answer to the frequently expressed need for simple information for groups and individuals interested in working for local, state, and national legislation. Many participated in the development of the material. It is the product of lay people concerned with the general welfare—not experts in legislative action.

The nine organizations whose representatives prepared this bulletin work together through the Youth Conservation Clearing House. They are:

- American Association of University Women
- American Home Economics Association
- Association for Childhood Education International
- Association of the Junior Leagues of America, Inc.
- General Federation of Women's Clubs
- National Congress of Parents and Teachers
- National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.
- National Education Association
- National Women's Christian Temperance Union

Copies of this bulletin are available from the national offices of the member organizations. Order your copy from the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 15th St. N.W., Washington 5, D. C. Single copies 25¢.

### *Book Week in 1952*

"Reading Is Fun" will be the slogan for the thirty-fourth annual Book Week to be celebrated November 16-22. Big books, little books, books of every shape and description form the background of the colorful 1952 Book Week poster designed by Artist Roger Duvoisin.

To emphasize the value in books and reading, book fairs, exhibits, programs, and displays will be sponsored by schools, libraries, bookstores, parent-teacher groups, and others.

A free manual describing all Book Week material can be obtained through the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53d Street, New York 18, N. Y., The Council, in addition to its work connected with the organization and promotion of National Children's Book Week,

is a year-round center of information on children's reading and related subjects.

### *Three New Films*

*What Greater Gift* is produced by the National Education Association in cooperation with the National Association of Secretaries of State Education Associations. This film will be helpful in interpreting the modern elementary school and in interesting young people in the profession of teaching. Parents and others in the community will enjoy it.

To *borrow* prints, write to the State Education Association in your state. To *buy* prints, write to the NEA Division of Press and Radio Relations, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. Prints are available in color, \$170; or black and white, \$75. Running time, 30 minutes. A limited supply of preview prints is available from the NEA.

*The Elementary School* is produced by the Film Production Service, State Department of Education, Richmond 16, Virginia. It may be purchased or rented. Price \$386 for color print; \$180 for black and white. Rental for color print, \$24; for black and white, \$12.

The situations shown were selected as illustrations of some characteristics of good schools as they are found in action in different sections of the state of Virginia. The practices and situations portrayed are not to be interpreted as being the best way of doing things nor the only way.

The film is designed for use with inservice study groups, preservice groups in teacher education, parent study groups, and PTA groups concerned with the elementary school. Total running time, one hour and ten minutes. Order from address given above.

*School Buildings and Equipment* shows current trends in school buildings and equipment and indicates how these support the educational programs of the modern elementary and secondary schools. Part I, 55 frames, deals with the elementary school; Part II, 58 frames, with the comprehensive high school. Film strips Nos. 45 and 46, \$6. Order from American Council on Education, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.

### *OMEP in Mexico City*

The World Organization for Early Childhood Education (Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Pre-scolaire—OMEP) held its fourth world assembly in Mexico City, August 1952. Twenty-one countries were represented.

The theme was "The Challenge of the

Children—The Social Importance of Early Childhood Education." Addresses were given by Alfredo Saavedra of Mexico; Agnes Snyder of the United States; and W. D. Wall of England, at present on the staff of UNESCO in Paris. Seven commissions worked on special assignments—school buildings, parent education, child development, preschool education, OMEP's plan of work, finance, and revision of statutes.

The United States was represented by seven voting delegates and fourteen observers. The voting delegates, appointed by the United States National Committee for Childhood Education, were Abigail Eliot, Estelle Farber, Agnes Snyder, Sadie Ginsberg, Kathleen McCann, Helen Christianson, and Mamie Heinz, chairman of this delegation.

The United States National Committee for Childhood Education was organized in January 1952 to cooperate with the United States Commission on UNESCO and with OMEP in promoting education for children throughout the world. Bess Goodykoontz is chairman of this national committee.

### *International Exhibit of Children's Books*

An international exhibit of children's books will be held in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, beginning in mid-November, on the occasion of the Seventh Session of UNESCO's General Conference. The exhibit is being organized by the French National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with other national commissions. Books from the United States were sent to the exhibit through the cooperative efforts of the U. S. National Commission on UNESCO, the Children's Book Council, and the American Library Association. Apart from its educational interest, this exhibit is an example of the international cooperation often recommended in the past by UNESCO's General Conference.

### *In Lebanon—A Demonstration School*

Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls has accepted the invitation of the federal government to provide technical assistance in developing a demonstration elementary school in Beirut, Lebanon, as part of the Lebanese educational program.

The college will recruit from its own faculty and from the staffs of cooperating Iowa public schools, six teachers—one each from kindergarten through the fifth grade.

The project is one of the first of its kind inaugurated under the Point-Four Program of the U. S. State Department.



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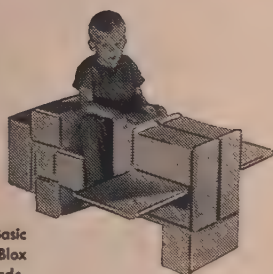
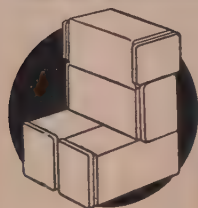
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# Books for Children . . .

Editor, LELAND B. JACOBS

*To develop children's taste in literature is a worthy business. To give children the best that writers, artists, and publishers are producing is a profitable educational transaction. The adult who provides youngsters with pleasurable experiences through fine books is an astute person indeed. He is a person whose full payment is received when the children whom he guides grow up knowing that in literature there are new worlds to explore, new experiences to comprehend, new pleasures to enjoy, and thoughts worth long remembering. This is the treasure chest of literature for children.*

**FOLLOW THE SUNSET.** By Herman and Nina Schneider. Illustrated by Lucille Corcos. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1952. Pp. 43. \$2.75. Children seek understanding of their physical world. Their questions about the "whys and wherefores" of natural phenomena are more than idle curiosity. Herman and Nina Schneider ably demonstrate their respect for children's desires to come to satisfying terms with their environment. More than this, they realize that answers to children's questions must be so concretely cumulative that well-rounded concepts are developed. They know, too, that the earth is a physical-social world and that children's questions are always social in their bearings.

From such realizations as these has *Follow the Sunset* been written. In this book one day passes, and within that one day the young reader follows the sunset and begins to comprehend the vast rhythms of the earth in its movement and the scientific hypothesis concerning the relation of the earth to the sun. But, along with this, the Schneiders show that following the sunset brings much the same activities in homes all around the world—a comforting idea and a significant one.

Since this book deals with the great rhythms of the earth it is most appropriate that the author's language is substantially lyric and the artist's drawings are rhythmic, peace-giving, and full of the colors of sunset. In writing, illustration, and bookmaking, this is a superior book for all children in an elementary school.

**CRACK OF THE BAT.** Edited by Phyllis Fenner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 160. \$2.50. The great American game of baseball is the center of interest in this collection of stories as the title implies. A worthy collection it is. Phyllis Fenner has chosen stories by a number of first-rate action story writers, among them John R. Tunis, Stephen Meader, Jackson U. Scholz, and Bob Considine. Most of the stories are fiction, but there are accounts of how Lou Gehrig joined the Yankees and how Babe Ruth got his name.

In spirit, the collection well represents the appeals of the game and of the players who make it a favorite sport. Throughout the selections the traditions of fair play, clean sportsmanship, and the will to win are apparent. Children in the later-elementary grades who are avid baseball fans will find *Crack of the Bat* a year-round way to enjoy the rousing action of the ball game.

**KID BROTHER.** By Jerrold Beim. Illustrated by Tracy Sugarman. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 425 Fourth Ave., 1952. Pp. 48. \$2. In half a dozen previous books Jerrold Beim has successfully explored for primary children certain aspects of the child's social orientation. This story centers in sibling relationships, a perennial problem within the family structure. Buzz got pretty vexed when Frankie, the younger brother, tried to tag along and mix in the older boys' activities. In fact, Buzz had just about decided that Frankie would never be anything but a nuisance, when the kid brother proved himself indispensable to Buzz's success.

Beim is successful in presenting the problem of brother relationships as an entertaining story, free from didacticism to the very end. The characters of Buzz and Frankie are clearly and effectively developed. Tracy Sugarman's drawings for the book are precisely right—boyish, virile, expert in catching the spirit of the text. Primary children will appreciate this straightforward consideration of a problem which is real in their own lives.

**SMALL-TROT.** By Francoise. Illustrated by the author. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., 1952. Pp. 31. \$2. This is a story of a small mouse who joins a traveling circus, becomes a star attraction, and thus achieves the satisfaction of supporting her family in fine fashion. Francoise's pictures are really the distinctive feature of the



book. On page after page, in appealing delicate colors, *Small-Trot* is pictured in a variety of activities and moods. The directness of the story is appropriately matched by the delightful simplicity of the art. For the four to six-year-old group, *Small-Trot* will cut quite a caper. She can be enjoyed again and again as she performs her way to success.

#### THE HEN THAT SAVED THE WORLD.

*Retold by Margaret Sperry. Illustrated by Per Beckman. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 210 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 64.*

\$2.25. In her childhood Margaret Sperry heard over and over the stories of old Norway. After her marriage she returned to Norway, to find that her love for the old tales abided. As she says, "they still fire my fancy as of old, but I see in them also great depths which belong not only to Norway but to all the world." It is in this spirit that the author has retold six favorite stories for English-speaking children. In these stories the reader learns why the bear's tail is short, how a hen set out to save the world, and who the enchanted cat really was. He finds out, too, all about trolls and their habits.

Here is a well-balanced collection of stories, told in straightforward narrative style, and illustrated in strong, clear, black and white drawings done by an artist who was born and lived in the Scandinavian setting of the stories. Middle-grade children will make an attentive audience for these appealing old tales from Norway.

**THE LEFTOVER ELF.** *By Mary Stolz. Illustrated by Peggy Bacon. New York: Harper and Bros., 49 E. 33rd St., 1952. Pp. 57.*

\$2. When people do not believe in elves, they no longer exist. But one elf knew that somewhere he would find a believer. So he set out in the springtime in Ireland to find just the right one to believe in him. His many adventures are the story that Mary Stolz tells so charmingly.

To write this type of story well is no easy task, for if the plot is not convincing it degenerates into a cuteness or a triteness that is banal. With ingeniousness and originality Mrs. Stolz avoids the traps and, more than this, catches in the cadences of her lilting prose the essence of true magic. And Peggy Bacon's black and white drawings are just as spritely as one could possibly wish. Seven to ten-year-olds should hear this story read aloud.

(Continued on page 148)

## "The Challenge of Uncertainty"

We hear much about "uncertainty" in our world, and indeed there is much of it. But educators, and all who serve youth in capacities related to instruction, know that given secure understanding in every step in every subject, children will respond confidently and effectively to any challenge . . . even to the challenge of uncertainty. We need only to make our methods of instruction, and our tools of instruction, clear and manageable in the goals to be achieved day by day in the classroom, and we will see our children growing daily more secure in their understanding.

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## Books for Children

(Continued from page 147)

CHILDREN OF THE GREAT SMOKY  
MOUNTAINS. By May Justus. Illustrated  
by Robert Henneberger. New York: E. P.  
Dutton and Co., Inc., 300 Fourth Ave.

1952. Pp. 158. \$2.50. May Justus knows  
firsthand, about the mountain region of which  
she writes, and these sixteen stories are all  
close to the earth and the people she loves.  
Some of them are home stories, some are holi-  
day stories, some are school stories. Several  
of the stories include the tunes that the moun-  
tain folk sing. For instance, there is the story  
of shy little Danny who, one day, sang a song  
about a red bird and became the chief per-  
former for the school visiting day. There is  
a story about how Sammy and his banjo  
changed the Pennybaker family fortunes.

Because May Justus uses the local speech  
rhythms of the people, the stories are folksy  
in the telling. Because the writer so greatly  
respects her characters, there is a warmth of  
understanding in their behavior. Because the  
writer knows so well the doings of the moun-  
tain people, there is naturalness in their  
actions. As in all her many previous books  
for children in the later-elementary grades  
the charm of southern mountain culture, folk-  
ways, and lore is a persuasive influence that  
attracts the child reader to the wonders of  
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# Books for Teachers . . .

Editors, WINIFRED E. BAIN  
and MARIE T. COTTER

---

**HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH MUSIC.** By M. Emmett Wilson. New York: Henry Schuman, 20 E. 70 St., 1951. Pp. 168. \$3. Here is a new nontechnical, practical guide for parents and teachers based on common sense and a knowledge of how children learn. The author is the father of five youngsters and professor of instrumental music at Ohio State University.

The story of music lessons which have started and stopped is all too common. Mr. Wilson indicates ways of preventing this, such as providing musical experiences before the age of formal lessons (usually eight or nine), permitting children use of and opportunities for experimenting with simple instruments, and always giving encouragement and guidance.

The role of the parent in promoting the musical welfare of the child is pointed up at the end of every chapter. Teachers who are eager for the musical growth and development of their students should find this an excellent guide.

It will answer many questions of parents and remind teachers themselves that importance lies in not what the child does for the music but what music does for the child. Making music a growing part of the child's life is the business of both parent and teacher.—Reviewed by FRANCES LAWLER, *Wheelock College, Boston*.

**HERE'S HOW AND WHEN.** By Armilda B. Keiser. New York: Friendship Press, 257 Fourth Ave., 1952. Pp. 174. \$2.75. Armilda Keiser has succeeded in making a "how-to-do-it" book educationally sound as well as entertainingly helpful. There are no stereotyped patterns or mechanical directions but conversational, challenging activities enlivened by Janet Smalley's intriguing illustrations and clear diagrams. Recommended activities include games, songs, and dramatizations in addition to many arts and crafts projects. The inspirations for these projects are based on holidays, festivals, child interests in other peoples and other lands with some suggestions for church and missionary workers. The

hundreds of suggestions given go beyond mere making and doing to instilling a sense of values and appealing to children's imagination and ingenuity.

Early teen-agers could take this book and start to figure out a project of interest to them. Younger children would need some guidance and Mrs. Keiser has included many concrete and practical ways for the organization of groups and the handling of materials. There is also an excellent list of resources (see ACEI material listed) for ideas and supplies. Here is an adequate guide for those sincere workers with children, whether in school, church, club, or home, who want to help them to play constructively and find themselves through exciting learning experiences.—Reviewed by GERTRUDE M. ABBIH, *Wheelock College, Boston*.

**TELEVISION AND OUR CHILDREN.** By Robert Lewis Shayon. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 55 Fifth Ave., 1951.

Pp. 94. \$1.50. In these days when one hears so much criticism and condemnation of television, it is good to find this little book, originally written in 1950 as a series of articles for the *Christian Science Monitor*, which presents a sane, well-balanced and well-documented discussion of this much debated subject. Movies and radio are included in the discussion.

The author, a father of young children, does not belittle the evils inherent in this kind of entertainment for children. But he helps the reader face the problems realistically, discussing the reasons why such things as violence and bloodshed appeal to our children.

Comparing T.V. to the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Mr. Shayon says: "Knowledge, adventure, excitement, contact with the grown-up world, status, freedom from restriction are all our children's important emotional needs. To satisfy them they follow the Pied Piper—television. They follow him excessively."

As educators and parents we have the responsibility of finding more acceptable ways of meeting emotional needs, or at least of making them less excessive. As citizens we have a responsibility for improving the quality of the programs. Though the author offers no easy solution to the problems which he presents, his book helps us to see our way a little more clearly.—Reviewed by MARY McLEOD BROOKS, *St. Johnsbury, Vt.*

# Bulletins and Pamphlets

Editor, MAY I. YOUNG

**PROFESSIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS.** *Selected references.* New York: Mills College of Education, 66 Fifth Ave., 1952. Mimeographed, 25¢. This small but well-selected list of references relating to the preschool field is divided under headings as "Understanding Backgrounds and Growth Needs" and "Organizational Planning." Magazines, bulletins, and pamphlets are included as well as books. The list of associations that are active in publishing materials should be very helpful, particularly to new teachers in the field.—M.I.Y.

**A HEALTHY PERSONALITY FOR YOUR CHILD.** By James L. Hymes, Jr. Washington, D. C.: Supt. of Documents, 1952. Pp. 23. 15¢. (Also, "Discussion Aid" for this pamphlet, 10¢. *Valuable for use in study groups.*) As they read this pamphlet parents will immediately recognize some of the things their own children do. Behavior at various age-levels of development is ob-

served and explained in term of urges and needs within the individual. The emergence of these urges at certain times in the growth pattern is emphasized and the resulting importance of timing in the treatment is stressed. For those parents who are sometimes confused and annoyed at some things their two-year-old or five-year-old or twelve-year-old does, reading this pamphlet should give them confidence and understanding as to the growing-up of the youngster.—M.I.Y.

**FUNCTIONAL ARITHMETIC: PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATIONS.** By Lowry W. Harding. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1952. Pp. 196. \$2. The stated purpose of this pamphlet is "to bring pictures of good practices" in arithmetic to students in college classes. This reviewer feels that the material included is equally valuable for teachers of long standing. The pictures are mainly self-explanatory and are, indeed, more thought-provoking than the accompanying text. At each grade level, kindergarten through eighth, there are many valuable suggestions for practical situations in which children may learn their arithmetic through using it. No matter what course of study

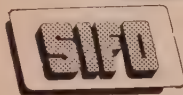
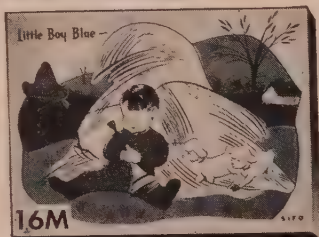
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is followed, the ideas contained would be helpful in making arithmetic come alive—M.I.Y.

**WHY CHILDREN MISBEHAVE.** By Charles W. Leonard. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1952. Pp. 48. 40¢. Charles Leonard emphasizes the fact that some of the things that children do and that we call "misbehavior" are normal and a part of the growing-up process. He differentiates between these and the antisocial acts which may indicate the emotionally disturbed child. He shows the importance of recognizing the cause in order to find suitable guidance measures.—Reviewed by ALICE K. LIVERIGHT, principal, Logan School, Philadelphia.

**A GUIDE FOR CHILD-STUDY GROUPS.** By Ethel Kawin. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1952. Pp. 72. 40¢. More and more, groups of people are coming together to work out common problems. In every case, there is need for planning and replanning to take care of the "machinery" which makes for smooth progress in discussion periods. No matter how experienced we may believe ourselves in group

meetings, it is a good thing to go through a pamphlet such as this and evaluate our own contribution to some group in which we are working. Suggestions are given for the function of each one in a group, be he leader or chairman or resource person or recorder or "just" a participant.

Illustrations and references aim particularly at child-study groups, but the material in this pamphlet will be found of value in any discussion group.—M.I.Y.

**GUIDING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL GROWTH.** By Ellis Weitzman. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1952. Pp. 49. 40¢. "Parents and teachers are responsible for guiding children's social growth." This pamphlet gives much help in analyzing social maturing of children in terms of behavior patterns.

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—Reviewed by ALICE K. LIVERIGHT.

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# Over the Editor's Desk

## **A Quick Visit Around the World**

Late Summer and early Fall bring an influx of many visitors to ACEI headquarters. The foreign student and exchange teacher programs offer us the opportunity to share ideas with visitors from other lands.

The guest book shows that we have had visitors from Indonesia, Sweden, Japan, Iran, Egypt, England, France, India, New Zealand, Scotland, and the Canal Zone.

How I wish I might share some of the flavor and zest of these visits. The first visitor from Indonesia was a charming person from their Ministry of Education who has spent the year in this country studying the education of young children. Her delight was infectious as she learned that Indonesia would receive one of the boxes of books and educational materials. (Prepared at the request of and financed by U. S. Department of State. See CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, April 1952.) Immediately she began to plan ways in which the materials might be displayed and demonstrated. And she said, "I am so lucky to have spent this year and have seen these things being used in your schools. I can tell so much more about them." The many people who were concerned in preparation of the exhibit would feel another measure of satisfaction for the long hours they put into the project.

Another visitor from Indonesia was a kindergarten teacher on a three month study program. She shared a song for the folk song book. (Being prepared by a joint committee with the National Council of Churches.)

You will love the melodic little song through which the ducks quack noisily and the children laugh. There is a simple little dance that goes with it. The do-re-mi scale worked beautifully as an international language in helping us learn the melody.

An exchange teacher from England, who spent last year in Oklahoma City, visited us on her way home. She gave a very interesting report on how non-professional personnel for their nursery schools are trained.

W. D. Wall, of UNESCO House in Paris, stopped in on his way to attend the OMEP meeting in Mexico City. Before going to UNESCO he was a teacher-educator in England, and he told of ways they were developing for working with groups of parents. It is a project of which we would like to hear more.

Our visitors have been so pleasant and interesting even though we had to entertain them under the crowded conditions of a library located in one end of a room where five people were working. We dream of the day when the library will be a gracious, peaceful place; where those visitors and members who come to browse may do so at a leisurely pace.

## **Quotes From The Executive Board**

When the Executive Board of ACEI met late in August there was much business dispatched. One morning as the discussion moved along I jotted down some of their comments. They all told stories from the classrooms but some need the facial expressions and voice intonations to make their point. If any of the Board members visit you, ask them for a story.

But here are some quotes:

From Blanche Ludlum, Nursery School UCLA, Los Angeles, "A four-year-old said, 'Here comes Joanie. She is my friend. She makes me feel warm all over.'"

Bernice Nash, kindergarten teacher, Lawrence, Kansas: "Desks can be screwed down without screws."

Eugenia Hunter, Woman's College, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, "A sixth grade boy wrote: 'We like teachers who know a lot about a lot of things in school, a lot about a lot of things out of school, and who can tell us about them in an interesting way.'"

## **Stimulated by Reading**

The beginning of the school year brings out articles on education in many magazines. I don't agree with all points but recently have been stimulated to do some thinking by these articles: *Saturday Review*, Annual Education Number, September 13, 1952. Claude M. Fuess in "An Educator's Balance Sheet" discusses some of the isms of the past 50 years. The whole issue is worth going through. *Newsweek Magazine*, September 22, 1952 ran a cover story on James Conant as "the No. 1 man in American education," and the issues in which he has become involved. *The New York Times Magazine*, September 7, 1952. "As School Opens—The Educators Examined," by Bertrand Russell, who urges that teachers use methods allowing young minds, but not manners, to run free.



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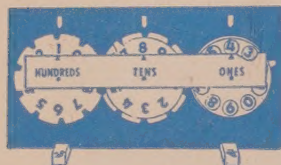
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